DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Supplement

TOME OF BATTLE

# The BOOK of NINE SWORDS™

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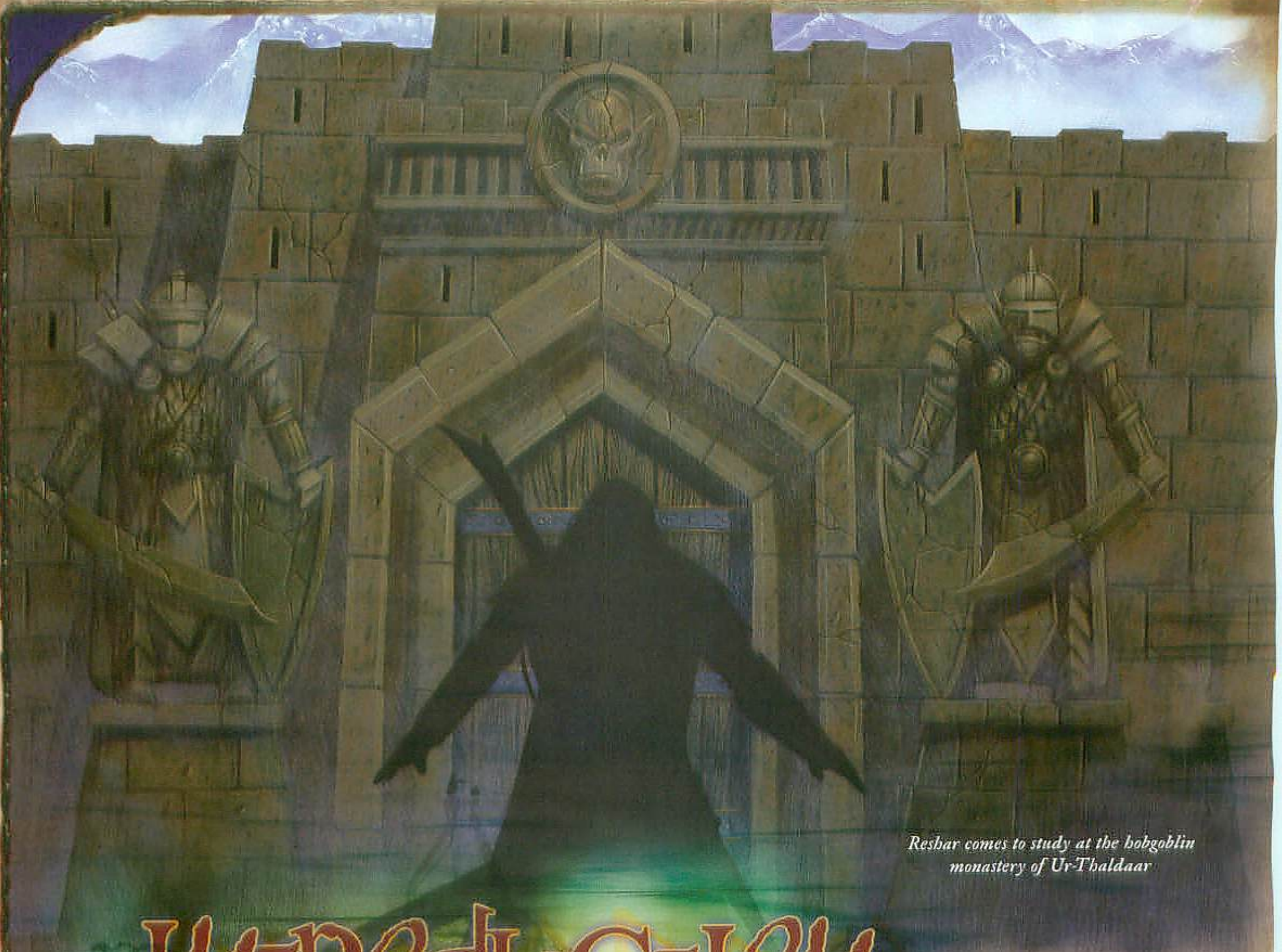


*Reshar comes to study at the hobgoblin monastery of Ur-Thaldaar*

# INTRODUCTION

*I am Harran Turiyeshor, the swordsage sometimes called the Iron Dragon. It was I who defeated the High Inquisitor of Tiamat in the Dragonskull Temple. It was I who slew the demon Varrash-Kral in the Ebon Tower. And it was my comrades and I who excised the mind flayer infestation from Darkvale three years ago, though two of my friends died horribly in the process. Such are my deeds.*

*I have wandered the world for twenty years, studying the Sublime Way and searching for my own true measure as a warrior and as a person. I like to think that I am a little wiser now than when I started, but I must leave that judgment to others. I spend my days teaching now, that I may honor the path I have followed my whole life.*

*Some of my students fall from the Way and turn to other pursuits. Some become champions of good and justice. Others use my teachings to wreak terrible wrongs in the world. But all who seek the Way must be taught, because it is not for the swordsmith to say whether his blades will spill the blood of the wicked or the innocent. Like all knowledge, the Sublime Way can be used for good or ill.*

*Attend now, young ones, and I will endeavor to teach you some small part of the truth of the sword.*

The world of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is filled with characters who pursue the ways of battle. Barbarians destroy their foes in berserk frenzies, and rangers are masters of the hunt. Paladins rely on their virtue and courage to sustain them against their opponents. Fighters master an array of special maneuvers and attacks to overcome the monsters and villains they encounter. But the highest of a warrior's arts is the Sublime Way—the secret lore that teaches a fighting character how to meld his inner strength, training, and discipline into the perfect weapon.

The Sublime Way is not magical—at least, not in a normal sense. It is a fighting system that harnesses a student's discipline and determination through knowledge, practice, and study. A master of the Sublime Way can perform martial exploits that are nearly superhuman—and, in fact, some of them actually transcend the natural.

Like fighters, students of the Sublime Way master a number of special maneuvers and strikes to defeat their foes. But, while

*Illus. by W. England*

a fighter's list of feats represents various combat techniques that he can use for attack or defense, the maneuvers of a Sublime Way master represent small moments of clarity, self-knowledge, piety, or perfection. A fighter uses Power Attack to strike harder, but a student of the Sublime Way who wants to accomplish the same goal performs a very specific mental and physical exercise that results in a mighty blow—if it is executed just right.

Some believe that a practitioner of the Sublime Way creates the power for his maneuvers by invoking a cosmic principle of perfection. This theory holds that if the student moves in a precise pattern while calling to mind the very specific mental images or analogies corresponding to that maneuver, he forges a brief connection with a source of power that lends strength and precision to his strike. Others believe that followers of the Sublime Way draw the necessary power from their own souls by harnessing *ki*—the energy of life. But whatever the truth of the matter, the results are spectacular. Few can match the agility, strength, and skill of a master of the Sublime Way.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

You need the three D&D core rulebooks—*Player's Handbook* (*PH*), *Dungeon Master's Guide* (*DMG*), and *Monster Manual* (*MM*)—to make the best use of *Tome of Battle: The Book of Nine Swords*. This book occasionally mentions material from a few D&D supplements, such as *Monster Manual III*, *Complete Adventurer*, and *Complete Warrior*, but none of these supplements are necessary to get the most out of *Tome of Battle*.

## A QUICK PRIMER TO THE SUBLIME WAY

*Tome of Battle: The Book of Nine Swords* describes a system of special combat "spells" known as the Sublime Way, the Nine Disciplines, or blade magic. Here are some of the salient terms and facts you will need to be familiar with as you peruse this book.

**Martial Adept:** A character with one or more levels in the crusader, swordsage, or warblade class is known as a martial adept.

**Maneuver:** A maneuver is a specific, one-shot effect that a martial adept initiates. In this way, a maneuver is functionally similar to a spell. However, a martial adept usually doesn't use up or expend maneuvers during the course of a day of adventuring the way a spellcaster does. He begins each new encounter with all the maneuvers he readied for the day available to him. When a martial adept initiates a maneuver, it is temporarily expended until he chooses to perform a special action required to recover his expended maneuvers. The type of action necessary varies for each martial adept class.

The three basic types of maneuvers are boosts, counters, and strikes. In addition, martial adepts can learn special abilities known as stances (which are described later in this introduction).

*Boost:* A boost augments a user's abilities, usually attacks, in some manner. For example, a martial adept who studies the Desert Wind discipline can wreathe his weapon in flame to deal extra fire damage on a successful hit.

*Counter:* A counter is an immediate action that allows a martial adept to foil an opponent's attacks. For example, the Setting Sun discipline teaches its adherents to avoid a foe's charge by stepping aside.

*Strike:* A strike is a special attack that draws on a discipline's teachings to invoke a special effect. The Stone Dragon discipline, for example, teaches its adherents to slam into their enemies with crushing blows.

**Martial Discipline:** A martial discipline is a family or school of maneuvers that share some common philosophy or effect. Nine martial disciplines exist, each consisting of fifteen to twenty maneuvers and stances. The nine disciplines are called Desert Wind, Devoted Spirit, Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, Setting Sun, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw, and White Raven. Most martial adepts don't have access to all the disciplines.

**Maneuvers Known:** The collection of maneuvers a martial adept has learned. You can think of this as the martial adept's spellbook or spell list. A martial adept's class and level determine the number and level of maneuvers she knows.

**Maneuvers Readied:** Most martial adepts cannot keep all maneuvers they know ready at all times. At the beginning of each day, a martial adept chooses some of the maneuvers she knows as her "readied" maneuvers (the number is determined by her class and level). These are the maneuvers she can initiate. A martial adept can change her readied maneuvers at any time, but doing this requires 5 minutes of rest, meditation, prayer, or the performance of various practice routines. The specific details depend on the martial adept's class.

**Stance:** A stance is a special type of maneuver. Each stance is a particular fighting pose that grants a martial adept special benefits and options. For example, the Tiger Claw discipline teaches stances that allow the user to unlock her feral, animalistic nature. Unlike other maneuvers, most stances can remain in effect for an indefinite time. All stances a character knows are available to her at all times. A character can adopt a stance, or change from one stance to another, as a swift action.

**Key Skill:** Every martial maneuver is tied to a skill, such as Balance, Concentration, or Jump. Sometimes key skills come into play in the initiation of a maneuver, but mostly they represent the ideals around which their respective disciplines are centered.

**Initiate:** A martial adept uses a martial maneuver by initiating it. So instead of casting a spell or manifesting a power, a character initiates a maneuver.

**Initiator Level:** Some maneuvers have effects that vary with the level of the character initiating them. Initiator level is functionally equivalent to caster level or manifester level—it's simply the relevant class level of the martial adept who initiates the power.

**Crusader:** The crusader is one of the three martial adept standard classes described in Chapter 1. Crusaders are warriors who use their devotion and zeal to power martial maneuvers.

**Swordsage:** The swordsage is another of the martial adept standard classes from Chapter 1. Swordsages are "blade wizards"—mystic swordfighters who can accomplish astonishing feats of martial prowess. They know more martial maneuvers than other martial adepts, and they have access to the most martial disciplines.

**Warblade:** The third of the martial adept standard classes described in Chapter 1 is the warblade. These pure warriors are ascetic champions who use martial maneuvers in place of the feats or rage that a fighter or barbarian would employ.

*Now I will speak of the Nine Swords. They are no mere legends, young one—I have seen two of them in my travels. This is the beginning of their story.*

*Three lifetimes ago, a young human called Reshar came to study at the hobgoblin monastery of Ur-Thaldaar. The hobgoblin swordmasters administered cruel tests and challenges, but, to their surprise, Reshar survived. They saw that he must be taught, and so they permitted him to remain.*

*From them, Reshar learned the secrets of the Iron Heart, the most fierce and difficult school of bladework in the world. When he had mastered the Iron Heart, Reshar took his leave and went next to the Great Golden Desert, where he presented himself to the Wind Dervishes of Andrama. When he had mastered the Desert Wind school, he went to the islands beyond the dawn and studied the ways of the Setting Sun. In the space of only three years, Reshar did what no one else has ever been able to do: He mastered all nine of the martial disciplines.*

*In the days of Reshar, the individual schools, philosophies, and traditions that we know as the Sublime Way were scattered haphazardly across the world. Adherents of the various disciplines were the fiercest of rivals, each seeking to prove the superiority of his own school over all the others.*

*But having mastered all nine disciplines, Reshar set out to end this rivalry. He returned to each place where he had studied and took its single most promising student as his own apprentice. Then he led his nine apprentices to the Sunspire Mountains, where he founded the Temple of the Nine Swords. For many years, Reshar and his Nine Masters sought the path to perfection, walking farther down the road of the Sublime Way than anyone had before—or since. Hundreds of students came to them and learned much from their temple.*

*After a century of study and teaching, Reshar called his masters together and told them he was leaving to travel the world again. Age had never touched him, other than to whiten his hair and line his face. The masters begged him to stay, but Reshar refused. Before he left, though, he gave each master a gift—a sword that embodied the principles, skills, and philosophy of the recipient's first discipline. "As long as these swords remain together, the Temple will never fail," he told the Nine Masters. "Now I go." And he set off alone, on foot and unarmed, because he feared nothing in the world. No one ever saw him again.*

*A lifetime passed, and one by one Reshar's original disciples died or returned to their own lands. The students they left behind became masters in their own right, and they guarded the nine swords with great care. But one night, the rakshasa lord Kaziir-Thet came to the Temple of the Nine Swords. He adopted the guise of a weary traveler and was given welcome at the temple. Kaziir-Thet stole Supernal Clarity, the sword of Diamond Mind, and fled with it into the wastelands. The masters pursued, but they could not catch the clever rakshasa prince.*

*From that day on, the temple began to fail. Slowly at first, the students of the various disciplines fell to bickering, consumed by the question of which path was best. Boasts and arguments became intrigues and deadly duels. In time, the remaining masters exiled the Tiger Lord and the Shadow Master—who had plotted to murder the rest—from the temple to restore order and harmony.*

*Enraged by their exile, the two outcast masters allied with each other, and together they raised an army of monsters in the wild mountains. A year after their exile, they returned at the head of a fearsome horde and destroyed the temple. It is said that all nine masters died that night. According to legend, the Spirit Seeker slew the Shadow Master and was then torn apart by demons. The Windlord and the Ironmaster defeated the Tiger Lord but afterward fell in battle against the giants and dragons of the evil army. Many treasures of the temple, including the eight remaining swords, were scattered to the four winds. Most were carried off by monsters from the Shadow Tiger horde, but at least two were rescued by temple students who managed to escape.*

*You now know the beginning of the story of the Nine Swords. But as you will see, each of the blades has its own story, and those stories are not finished. It is said that someday the Nine Swords will be brought together again, Reshar will return from his wandering, and harmony will be restored to the world. I do not know if any part of the tale I have told is true, but it is a good story, is it not?*

—Harran Turiyeshor, swordsage

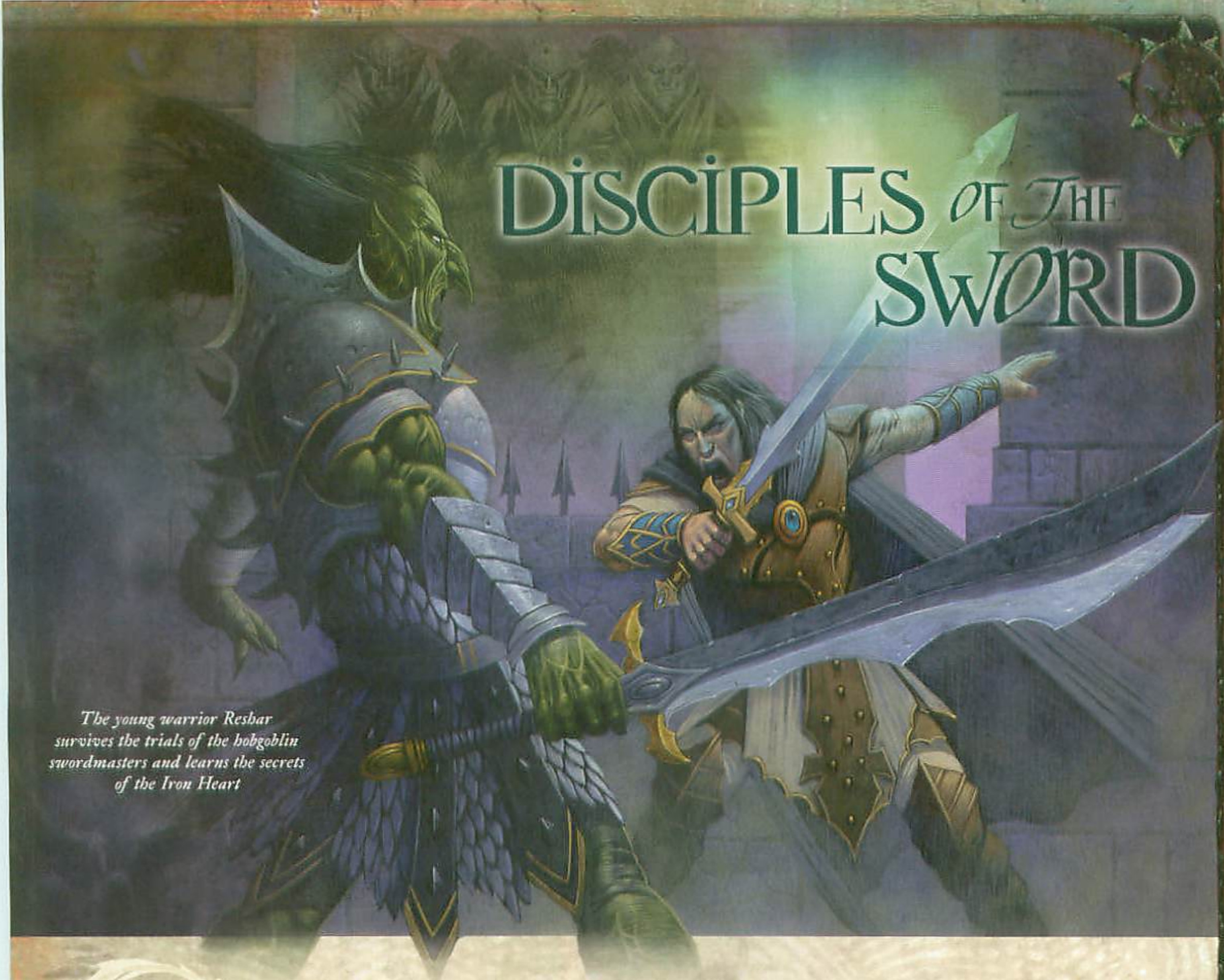
## BEHIND THE CURTAIN: BLENDING GENRES

Is *Tome of Battle* martial arts for the Dungeons & Dragons Game? Is it good only for an *Oriental Adventures*-style game? Does it challenge your conception of a Western European fantasy world? In short: Sort of, no, and we certainly hope so.

If you've ever played a ninja or samurai—or for that matter, a monk—amid a group of "standard" D&D heroes, then this book is for you. Thanks to the influence of Japanese anime, Hong Kong action movies, and popular video games, the notion of a fantasy setting has grown very broad in the last few years. Fantasy gaming isn't just about knights and castles and dragons anymore. Ninjas and samurai, ronin and shugenja, yakuza and monks—all these and more have gradually filtered into people's expectations for a fantasy world. Games such as *Final Fantasy* and *Soul Calibur*, as well as movies such as *Kill Bill* and *The Matrix*, are excellent examples of how martial arts have become "Westernized" in film and electronic gaming—and how eagerly Western audiences have accepted martial arts idioms in their action stories and games.

*Tome of Battle: Book of the Nine Swords* deliberately blends the genres of Far East action games and the "typical" D&D game world. Portions of this material resemble a martial-arts supplement suitable for an *Oriental Adventures* game. Other parts, however, deliberately fantasticize and genericize martial arts idioms (such as fighting schools and special combat maneuvers) and import them into the default D&D campaign. More than any other, this book represents "culture-blind" D&D: fantasy gaming in a world where silent ninjas and wandering kung-fu masters live side by side with noble paladins and fearsome monsters. *Tome of Battle* isn't your parents' D&D—it's bigger, bolder, and even more fantastic than ever before.

# DISCIPLES OF THE SWORD



*The young warrior Reshar survives the trials of the hobgoblin swordmasters and learns the secrets of the Iron Heart*

Illus. by W. England

*At the heart of the Sublime Way, young students, lies one simple precept: The warrior who knows himself perfectly cannot be defeated. You cannot predict where you will fight, or what weapons you will find close at hand, or how your enemies will strike at you. But you can prepare yourself for that moment through constant practice, study, and reflection. Conquer your own body, mind, and spirit, and you cannot help but be victorious over your enemies.*

*From this basic premise stem three distinct roads. She who embarks on the path of physical mastery becomes a warblade—one of the most skillful and dedicated warriors in the world. Fierce and uncompromising, the warblade knows no fear.*

*The crusader is a warrior who seeks victory through the discipline of the spirit. Devotion, piety, and zeal are her weapons. A crusader becomes a living vessel of her deity's will—an instrument of justice or vengeance who can overcome the most insuperable of obstacles with only the sheer power of her faith and the strength of her arm.*

*The third road is the path of the swordsage—the road I have followed for most of my life. The swordsage seeks to know his own mind, and to perceive and act with perfect clarity. It is clearly the best of the three approaches—but then, I am a swordsage. What else would you expect me to say?*

—Harran Turiyeshor

Those who devote their lives to studying some aspect of the Sublime Way are known as martial adepts. All are skilled in personal combat, but they rely on perception, learning, and willpower, in addition to pure physical aptitude for battle. Martial adepts seek to fuse tangible physical prowess with utmost control of the mind and spirit.

The three martial adept classes are the crusader, swordsage, and warblade. These three standard classes are summarized below.

**Crusader:** This holy (or unholy) warrior is devoted to the service of a deity or principle. Through exercises of faith and inner strength, she gains the ability to execute spectacular martial maneuvers and confront those foes that are anathema to her cause.

**Swordsage:** Also known as a blade wizard, a swordsage is a martial artist who has learned how to invoke a unique form of magic to accomplish truly superhuman (and supernatural) exploits.

**Warblade:** A warblade is an exemplar of pure martial skill. Though he lacks the supernatural power of the crusader or swordsage, he is fully equivalent to the barbarian or fighter in terms of combat skills, relying on martial maneuvers instead of rage or feats.

# CRUSADER

*"Make your peace with whatever vile deity you worship, monster, for I am the sword of Pelor, and I will not fail in my strike!"*

—Daresa, crusader of Pelor

Devoted knight, divine agent, instrument of vengeance, peerless fighting machine—the crusader is a warrior dedicated to good, evil, law, chaos, or some other cause. She seeks out and destroys the enemies of her chosen faith. Strengthened by prayer or absolute devotion to a principle, armored by unshakable faith, and driven by her convictions, a good crusader is a mighty weapon against injustice and malice. An evil crusader, on the other hand, is a cruel and fearsome warrior of darkness.

A crusader who embraces a religion or holy faith is similar to a paladin in that she commands a number of holy (or unholy) powers. However, a crusader has no skill with divine spellcasting; she is a martial adept whose maneuvers are unpredictable gifts of divine power. Trusting in the power of her chosen deity, she allows faith and intuition to guide her through battle. Many crusaders receive the call to their cause early in life, but never study formally at a temple or monastery. These warriors are gifted with a natural ability to channel the divine energies of their cause, but in a raw, untamed manner. A crusader has absolute faith in her ability to draw on the source of her power, but she never quite knows how that power will manifest.

## MAKING A CRUSADER

A crusader is primarily a front-line melee battler, much like the fighter or paladin. Her martial maneuvers give her more tactical flexibility than the fighter and make her a dynamic and well-rounded combatant. Most crusaders also make good leaders, since they are both charismatic and dedicated.

**Abilities:** Strength and Constitution are vital to a crusader, since she is often in harm's way. Intelligence is useful for gaining plenty of skill points, which a crusader needs to purchase the ranks in Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Balance, the key skills for her martial disciplines. Dexterity is useful for any character in combat, but a crusader's ability to wear heavy armor means that she is not as dependent on a high Dexterity score as other characters.

**Races:** Most crusaders are humans, half-elves, or dwarves, because the ideals of dedication, service, zeal, and courage are important in both dwarf and human cultures. Elves, gnomes, and halflings generally lack the seriousness, single-minded devotion, and moderate fanaticism required to succeed as crusaders. Half-orcs rarely become crusaders, but those who do follow this path often excel at it. Many half-orcs spend their lives searching for an ideal to believe in or a community to which they can belong, and the way of the crusader appeals to such souls.

**Alignment:** A crusader can choose any alignment except neutral—she must stand for some ideal, whether chaos, good, evil, law, or a combination of principles. To be a crusader is to devote oneself wholeheartedly to a cause or deity, and this way of life leaves no room for indecision or unwillingness to commit. A crusader's alignment reflects

## THE NINE DISCIPLINES

*I will speak now of the Nine Disciplines that comprise the Sublime Way. Attend carefully, young one.*

*Desert Wind is the discipline of movement. Speed is the weapon of the warrior who follows this path. He strikes and retreats constantly, never standing still in battle. He is a leaping flame—a burning sirocco of the wastes.*

*Devoted Spirit is the discipline of self-knowledge and spirituality, and those who follow this path arm themselves with purity and faith. No other warrior is better suited to confront the minions of evil—but beware, because some choose to pervert this discipline by worshiping powers of darkness instead of powers of light.*

*To practice Diamond Mind is to learn the secret of action without volition. A Diamond Mind adept can make the raindrops stand still if he wishes. He understands that any battle is a contest of wills, and that victory is inevitable for the warrior who wins that contest.*

*Iron Heart is the quest for skill, pure and simple. A warrior who follows this path studies ever more complex and difficult maneuvers for battle. The deep communion he shares with the spirit of steel causes a sword to become a living thing in his hands.*

*The way of the Setting Sun changes weakness into strength and folly into wisdom. A practitioner of this school studies the art of permitting an adversary to defeat himself.*

*A follower of the Shadow Hand treads a lonely and dangerous path. His is the road of stealth, of deceit, of blows struck without answer, and of death in the dark. A Shadow Hand master kills before his adversary even knows he is in peril.*

*Stone Dragon is the discipline of strength, of endurance, of pure physical and spiritual power. A warrior of the Stone Dragon is a hardy foe with the strength of the mountain itself in his grasp.*

*He who studies the Tiger Claw seeks to unleash his hidden savagery—the feral instincts and blind animal rage that lurk within. This warrior is strong, quick, and unpredictable, capable of tearing most opponents apart with his bare hands.*

*And finally, we come to the discipline of the White Raven—the path of the great captain, the leader of warriors, and the crusader. A White Raven disciple studies the art of fighting in concert with his allies, and uses his fierce war cries to great effect in battle.*

*These are the Nine Disciplines. Some whisper of a secret Tenth Path, but I think such rumors are no more than bard's tales. Pay them no attention, my student!*

her chosen cause, and in some cases molds the maneuvers she can use.

Good and lawful crusaders are more common than chaotic or evil ones, since obedience and service come more easily to characters of the former alignments. However, the rare evil crusader is a force to be reckoned with. She is a cruel and fearsome reaver—a scourge who preys on the weak and defenseless to honor her dark patrons.

**Starting Gold:** 6d4×10 gp (150 gp).

**Starting Age:** As paladin (PH 109).

## CLASS FEATURES

First and foremost, a crusader is a competent combatant. She fights as skillfully as a fighter, paladin, or ranger does, relying on heavy armor and a good selection of weapons to gain the edge over her opponents. To this basic fighting prowess, she adds several abilities derived from her absolute faith and devotion to her chosen ideal. When fighting for her cause, a crusader becomes an unstoppable force on the battlefield. Terrible injuries might send less dedicated warriors running from the fight, but a crusader transforms such setbacks into martial fury that enables her to fight on long after other warriors would have been overwhelmed.

A crusader masters a small number of martial maneuvers as she gains levels. Derived from her extraordinary self-discipline, these maneuvers include catechisms of faith, spiritual devotions, and the ability to strike spectacular blows in the service of her patron or cause. Armed with the power of her faith, she can shatter boulders, shrug off enemy attacks, or rally an army with a single act of bravery.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** As a crusader, you are proficient with simple weapons, martial weapons, light, medium, and heavy armor, and all shields.

**Maneuvers:** You begin your career with knowledge of five martial maneuvers. The disciplines available to you are Devoted Spirit, Stone Dragon, and White Raven.

Once you know a maneuver, you must ready it before you can use it (see Maneuvers Readied, below). A maneuver usable by crusaders is considered an extraordinary ability unless otherwise noted in its description. Your maneuvers are not affected by spell resistance, and you do not provoke attacks of opportunity when you initiate one.

You learn additional maneuvers at higher levels, as shown on Table 1–1. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. See Table 3–1, page 39, to determine the highest-level maneuvers you can learn.

*Daresa, crusader of Pelor*

*Illus. by K. Andrasofszky*

Upon reaching 4th level, and at every even-numbered crusader level after that (6th, 8th, 10th, and so on), you can choose to learn a new maneuver in place of one you already know. In effect, you lose the old maneuver in exchange for the new one. You can choose a new maneuver of any level you like, as long as you observe your restriction on the highest-level maneuvers you know; you need not replace the old maneuver with a maneuver of the same level. For example, upon reaching 10th level, you could trade in a single 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd- or 4th-level maneuver for a maneuver of 5th level or lower, as long as you meet the prerequisite of the new maneuver. You can swap only a single maneuver at any given level.

**Maneuvers Readied:** You can ready all five maneuvers you know at 1st level, but as you advance in level and learn more maneuvers, you must choose which maneuvers to ready. You ready maneuvers by praying for 5 minutes. The maneuvers you choose remain readied until you decide to pray again and change them. You need not sleep or rest for any long period of time in order to ready your maneuvers; any time you spend 5 minutes in prayer, you can change your readied maneuvers.

You begin an encounter with all your readied maneuvers unexpended, regardless of how many times you might have already used them since you chose them. When you initiate a maneuver, you expend it for the current encounter, so each of your readied maneuvers can be used once per encounter (unless you recover them, as described below).

Crusaders are unique among martial adepts, relying on flashes of divine inspiration to use their martial maneuvers. As such, you do not control access to your readied maneuvers. Before you take your first action in an encounter, two of your readied maneuvers (randomly determined) are granted to you. The rest of your readied maneuvers are withheld, currently inaccessible. At the end of each turn, one previously withheld maneuver (again, randomly determined) is granted to you, and thus becomes accessible for your next turn and subsequent turns. You can freely choose to initiate any maneuver that is currently granted when your turn begins, but you cannot initiate a withheld maneuver. If you choose not to employ a maneuver in a given round, your currently granted maneuvers remain available, and a previously withheld maneuver is granted, as described above. In other words, it doesn't matter if you use your maneuvers or not—at the end of each of your turns, one withheld maneuver from your

**TABLE 1–1: THE CRUSADER** **HIT DIE: D10**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Furious counterstrike, steely resolve 5 | 5 | 5 (2) | 1 |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | Indomitable soul | 5 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | Zealous surge | 6 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Steely resolve 10 | 6 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | — | 7 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 6th | +6/+1 | +5 | +2 | +2 | Smite 1/day | 7 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 7th | +7/+2 | +5 | +2 | +2 | — | 8 | 5 (2) | 2 |
| 8th | +8/+3 | +6 | +2 | +2 | Steely resolve 15 | 8 | 5 (2) | 3 |
| 9th | +9/+4 | +6 | +3 | +3 | — | 9 | 5 (2) | 3 |
| 10th | +10/+5 | +7 | +3 | +3 | Die Hard | 9 | 6 (3) | 3 |
| 11th | +11/+6/+1 | +7 | +3 | +3 | — | 10 | 6 (3) | 3 |
| 12th | +12/+7/+2 | +8 | +4 | +4 | Steely resolve 20 | 10 | 6 (3) | 3 |
| 13th | +13/+8/+3 | +8 | +4 | +4 | Mettle | 11 | 6 (3) | 3 |
| 14th | +14/+9/+4 | +9 | +4 | +4 | — | 11 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 15th | +15/+10/+5 | +9 | +5 | +5 | — | 12 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 16th | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +10 | +5 | +5 | Steely resolve 25 | 12 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 17th | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +10 | +5 | +5 | — | 13 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 18th | +18/+13/+8/+3 | +11 | +6 | +6 | Smite 2/day | 13 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 19th | +19/+14/+9/+4 | +11 | +6 | +6 | — | 14 | 6 (3) | 4 |
| 20th | +20/+15/+10/+5 | +12 | +6 | +6 | Steely resolve 30 | 14 | 7 (4) | 4 |

**Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level, ×4 at 1st level):** Balance, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Martial Lore*, Ride.

*New skill described on page 28.

selection of readied maneuvers is granted to you. Over the course of a few rounds, all your maneuvers will eventually be granted.

If, at the end of your turn, you cannot be granted a maneuver because you have no withheld maneuvers remaining, you recover all expended maneuvers, and a new pair of readied maneuvers is granted to you. Randomly determine which of your maneuvers are granted and which are withheld. At the end of your next turn, a withheld maneuver is granted to you, and the whole process of divine inspiration begins again.

You begin an encounter with an additional granted maneuver at 10th level (bringing your total to three), and again at 20th level (bringing your total to four).

**Stances Known:** You begin play with knowledge of one 1st-level stance from the Devoted Spirit, Stone Dragon, or White Raven discipline. At 2nd, 8th, and 14th level, you can choose an additional stance. Unlike maneuvers, stances are not expended, and you do not have to ready them. All the stances you know are available to you at all times, and you can change the stance you currently use as a swift action. A stance is an extraordinary ability unless otherwise stated in the stance description.

Unlike with maneuvers, you cannot learn a new stance at higher levels in place of one you already know.

**Steely Resolve (Ex):** Your supreme dedication and intense focus allow you to temporarily set aside the pain and hindering effects of injuries. When an opponent strikes you, the injury does not immediately affect you.

You have a delayed damage pool that allows you to forestall the effects of many injuries. This pool begins at 0 with each encounter. When you are attacked, any hit point damage the blow deals is added to your delayed damage pool. At the end of your next turn, you take damage equal to the total stored in your delayed damage pool, which then resets to 0. Any healing you receive can either increase your current hit point total as normal or reduce the total damage in your delayed damage pool. When you receive healing, you choose whether it affects your damage pool, your hit points, or both (you can split the amount of healing as you wish). Most crusaders opt to keep as much damage in their delayed damage pool as possible to maximize the benefit of their furious counterstrike ability (see below).

Special effects tied to an attack, such as energy drain, stun, and so forth, still affect you as normal, and their effects are not delayed by this ability. For example, if you are bitten by a venomous spider, you must still attempt a Fortitude save against the poison immediately, even though the bite damage shifts into your delayed damage pool. By the same token, any other special attack that imposes a condition, such as a medusa's petrifying gaze, takes immediate effect on you.

At 1st level, your delayed damage pool can hold up to 5 points of damage. Any damage beyond that comes off your hit points as normal. The maximum damage your pool holds increases by 5 at 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th level.

**Furious Counterstrike (Ex):** You can channel the pain of your injuries into a boiling rage that lets you lash out at your enemies with renewed vigor and power. Each attack that strikes you only pushes you onward to greater glory.

During your turn, you gain a bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls equal to the current value of your delayed damage pool (see steely resolve, above) divided by 5, and rounding down (minimum +1). You can only gain a maximum bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls of +6 from furious counterstrike. Use the table below to quickly determine the attack bonus and damage bonus from furious counterstrike, based on the amount of damage in your delayed damage pool. This ability's benefits last until the end of your turn.

| Delayed Damage Pool Points | Furious Counterstrike Bonus |
|---|---|
| 1–9 | +1 |
| 10–14 | +2 |
| 15–19 | +3 |
| 20–24 | +4 |
| 25–29 | +5 |
| 30+ | +6 |

**Indomitable Soul (Ex):** Beginning at 2nd level, you draw upon the power of your unwavering faith to steel yourself against the enemies you face. Your personality, energy, and dedication to your faith make it possible for you to shrug off attacks that target your willpower.

You add your Charisma bonus (if any) as a bonus on Will saves. This bonus does not stack with that from a paladin's divine grace ability.

**Zealous Surge (Ex):** Your boundless energy and dedication to your cause allow you to throw off the effect of a special attack, spell, or other attack that would otherwise hinder or harm you. Once per day, from 3rd level on, you can opt to reroll a single saving throw. You must abide by the result of the new, second saving throw, even if it is lower than the first. This ability does not require an action. You simply decide to use it after seeing the result of your saving throw roll but before the DM tells you if it fails or succeeds.

**Smite (Ex):** Driven by the courage of your convictions and the ironclad strength of your beliefs, you can strike back at those who dare stand against your cause. Starting at 6th level, once per day, you can concentrate all your anger, hatred, and determination into a single attack. On the next melee attack you make, you gain a bonus on your attack roll equal to your Charisma bonus (if any) and a bonus on damage equal to your crusader level.

At 18th level, you gain an additional use of smite per day.

**Die Hard (Ex):** At 10th level, you gain Die Hard as a bonus feat.

**Mettle (Ex):** You can resist magical attacks with greater effectiveness than other warriors. Beginning at 13th level, by drawing on your boundless energy and dedication to your cause, you can shrug off effects that would hinder even the toughest warrior. If you succeed on a Fortitude or Will save against an attack that would normally produce a lesser effect on a successful save (such as a spell with a saving throw entry of Will half or Fortitude partial), you instead negate the effect. You do not gain the benefit of mettle when you are unconscious or sleeping.

## PLAYING A CRUSADER

When fog chills the battlefield, and your frost-rimed mail weighs on your stiffening muscles, your faith warms you. It is the fire that burns inside, illuminating your life with the ideals of your patron or cause. Alms or arms for the impoverished, a hand or a lash for the downtrodden, mercy or cruelty—you decide according to your faith. As a living instrument of your cause, you have worked for years to become a weapon worthy of your ideal. Where others hesitate, you press on with certainty, unshakable in your beliefs.

As a crusader, you undertake adventures according to the dictates of your cause, your temple, or your conscience. You might find yourself in a swampy mausoleum slaying infidel trolls with a sword in one hand and a flask of acid in the other, or bouncing across sahuagin-infested waves on a halfling sloop because you owe a friend safe passage across the straits. You might even find yourself on the cold, muddy field of battle, charging shoulder to shoulder with peasants and soldiers, raising pitchforks and shields against the pelting *ice storms* of the enemy. The only constant is the depth of your devotion to your cause—the night winds will snuff out the stars before your fidelity ever wavers.

### RELIGION

Your choice of deity is paramount, since religion is an obvious target for the devotion and zeal embodied by this class. If you are good, you might serve Pelor or St. Cuthbert, or perhaps join the beleaguered crusaders of Heironeous, who are famous for their tenacious defense of many a lost cause. Alternatively, if you are a dwarf, Moradin is a natural choice for patron. You might join the Ruby Knights of Wee Jas, who are reputed to be tainted by the necromancy of their Witch Goddess. Chaotic crusaders are rare, but those who worship Kord are often paragons of the Stone Dragon discipline, and Ehlonna's ambushing crusaders tend to be adept at taking and holding forestland. If you are evil, you might take up the cause of Nerull or Erythnul the Many, whose crusaders are plagues upon the land.

### OTHER CLASSES

Your power stems from your devotion to your cause, and you value martial prowess, dedication, and self-discipline. You generally get along well with paladins, clerics, fighters, and warblades, as long as their alignments are compatible with yours. You might scorn those of antithetical alignments as heathens or target them with your proselytizing, depending on the evangelism inherent in your own religion. Monks and swordsages are also worthy companions for you, although their reliance on *ki* and skill, rather than faith and armor, is suspect. The subterfuge of rogues, the superficiality of bards, and the susceptibility of most arcane casters to a single greataxe blow force members of those classes to prove themselves before earning your esteem.

### COMBAT

Your specific tactics in battle depend on the discipline you chose and the maneuvers you have learned. However, certain tactics are common to all crusaders.

As a zealous proponent of your cause, you are generally at the forefront of any battle. Fighting on the front line allows you to maximize the benefits you gain from your class abilities, and also to protect a weaker ally by absorbing an enemy's blows yourself. Doing so benefits both you and your party in various ways. First, your steely resolve ability makes any attacks you deliver after taking damage both more accurate and more powerful than they were before you were injured. Furthermore, if opponents focus on you, they cannot injure your allies. Thus, taking damage each round should be your goal. The sooner you can engage the toughest opponent in melee, the faster you can bolster your attacks. As a crusader, you're at your best when you can take on the monster or opponent that deals the most damage.

Other tactics vary according to your chosen discipline. Stone Dragon crusaders favor head-on charges, boulder-rolling into opponents and mountain-hammering anyone left standing. If you have a high Strength score, you should consider feats that take advantage of that ability if you choose this path (such as Power Attack, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, and Improved Sunder). As a Devoted Spirit crusader, some of your maneuvers function only against creatures with opposed alignments. Devoted Spirit crusaders are often hunters on the battlefield, dedicated to chasing down the most dangerous foes. If you are a White Raven crusader, you are more group-oriented than other crusaders. Fighting shoulder to shoulder with allies, directing flanks, coordinating charges, and covering a cleric while he heals the wounded are among the specialties of a White Raven crusader.

At high levels, your mettle ability affords you an extra measure of confidence when you confront enemies that use spells or spell-like abilities. Many demons, devils, and other outsiders have spell-like abilities, and these are precisely the foes that you are trained to vanquish (particularly if you're a Devoted Spirit crusader). Combined with the indomitable soul ability, mettle can prove to be surpassingly powerful.

### ADVANCEMENT

Ever since the Spirit Seeker was torn apart by demons during the catastrophic battle that ended in the destruction and dispersal of the Shadow Tiger horde, master crusaders have sought to attain his perfect harmony of spirit, body, and weapon mastery. In three warring stone citadels, the combat masters of the Vix Tholm, the Ruby Knights of Wee Jas, and the reth dekala (see page 154) each teach pilgrims the three precepts of combat: skill, self-discipline, and knowledge.

To take training at a citadel, you must maintain maximum ranks in your most important skills. Rare is a crusader who does not have maximum ranks in the skill most appropriate to her path (Balance for Stone Dragon, Intimidate for Devoted Spirit, and Diplomacy for White Raven). In addition, you live and die by your discipline. If you hope to achieve true mastery, you must choose your discipline wisely and devote yourself to it completely. If you're physically weak, you would be ill-advised to pursue the path of the Stone Dragon, but your strength of will might serve you well on the path of the Devoted Spirit.

If you're advancing as a Stone Dragon adept, you seek to acquire items, learn feats, and develop maneuver combinations that emphasize strength and direct confrontation. If yours is the path of the White Raven, you focus on your leadership abilities and the tactical details of combat. If you embrace the Devoted Spirit discipline, you turn inward, cultivating wisdom and devout faith.

### HUMAN CRUSADER STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Scale mail (+4 AC, armor check penalty –4, speed 20 ft., 30 lb.).

Heavy wooden shield (+2 AC, armor check penalty –2, 10 lb.).

**Weapons:** Longsword (1d8, crit 19–20/×2, 4 lb., one-handed slashing).

Shortbow (1d6, crit ×3, range inc. 60 ft., 2 lb., piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier.

| Skill | Ranks | Ability | Armor Check Penalty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Balance | 4 | Dex | — |
| Concentration | 4 | Con | — |
| Diplomacy | 4 | Cha | — |
| Intimidate | 4 | Cha | — |
| Jump | 4 | Str | –6 |
| Martial Lore | 4 | Int | — |
| Ride | 4 | Dex | — |
| Spot (cc) | 2 | Wis | — |

**Feat:** Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Bonus Feat:** Iron Will.

**Gear:** Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 3 torches, quiver with 20 arrows, tent, traveler's outfit, cold weather outfit, holy symbol.

**Gold:** 2d4 gp.

## CRUSADERS IN THE WORLD

*"Howling over the thunder, the antlered demons leapt down from the peak. The demon blades were as numerous as the driving spikes of sleet, but the Vix Tholm crusaders held their ground. I began to believe that the mountain would slide out from under the crusaders' feet before they yielded an inch."*

—Darh Nas'urb, dwarf pilgrim of Heironeous

Crusaders bring clashing steel, stirring speeches, and intense fervor to the campaign. The first sign of a crusader's presence might be a knight-herald riding alone down the Processional to the King's Fane, where he tacks a scroll to the door and promptly gallops off, his helmeted visage revealing nothing.

Crusaders can launch grand crusades, each of which can serve as the foundation for a thousand adventures. Crusaders who support less than popular causes might hold clandestine meetings in the night, filled with whispered negotiations. Alternatively, if war has already broken out, the campaign might feature battles along ramparts studded with ballistae and bombarded with flaming pitch. A crusade might be a one-time occurrence when a passing army moves through the kingdom's hinterlands, or it might serve as the entire focus of the campaign, with the PCs moving up through the ranks of a holy army to lead the charge on the infidels' stronghold.

Crusaders can also move through a campaign world individually. Perhaps a PC crusader is the last adherent of her cause, destined to make a glorious final stand against an evil that has consumed her heritage. She might join with other adventurers, seeking strength in their company. A PC crusader could also be an evangelist from a far land who has come to the campaign area to spread the word of her cause—and perhaps even to recruit adventurers whom she can take back to her homeland to fight alongside her. Perhaps a PC crusader is falsely accused of heresy and forced to travel alone, dodging bounty hunters and assassins, all while upholding her ideals without the support or respect of her erstwhile colleagues.

### DAILY LIFE

A crusader views the world through the twin lenses of faith and battle. A farmer seeding the furrows, a merchant hawking oranges and pottery, an apprentice toasting his fingers with an ironically misfired *burning hands*—to the crusader, these everyday sights are not random occurrences, but building blocks in the battle between good and evil, law and chaos. For whom does the farmer toil, and to whom does he pay taxes—a good baron, an evil count? Is the merchant trading with priests of Nerull or changing monies with dark emissaries from the reth dekala? If the apprentice learns his spells, to what end will he use them? In every facet of life, the crusader sees some embodiment of her principles.

### NOTABLES

Over the centuries since the great battle that resulted in the destruction of the Shadow Tiger horde, many crusaders have sought to emulate the Spirit Seeker. This enigmatic crusader slew the Shadow Master and was subsequently torn apart by demons, but few facts about his life are known. Many, in fact, argue that the Spirit Seeker was a female, and many more argue over the exact faith that this mysterious figure embraced. The Vix Tholm believe that the Seeker was a devotee of Heironeous, but the Chapeaux and Stars of St. Cuthbert claim him as their own. The Ruby Knights of Wee Jas claim that he sought the spirits of the dead and was thus firmly in the Jasite camp.

### ORGANIZATIONS

After the Temple of Nine Swords collapsed, many crusaders founded martial orders allied with their religions. These new organizations placed the deity before the sword—a reversal of the temple's priorities. The most powerful and secretive of these orders survive today. Many, however, perished as a result of ecclesiastical infighting. The established church hierarchies did not trust these new "sword orders," many of which had recovered enough treasure from the fallen Temple of Nine Swords to make their members very wealthy. Purges and pogroms were common as the churches asserted control over the orders and seized their wealth. The church of St. Cuthbert subsumed its crusader order, but many other churches exterminated their crusaders in the night. The church of Heironeous rose above such petty tyrannies, and it still maintains a cordial relationship with its crusader order, the Vix Tholm, though the relationship is sometimes strained by rivalry. From the start, the Ruby Knights of Wee Jas swore a binding covenant—a dark pact, according to some—to serve the high priests and priestesses as the military arm of the Witch Goddess's temples, and they continue to do so. Crusader orders dedicated to Pelor, Hextor, Ehlonna, and Nerull also exist, and rumors abound of hidden temples that house crusaders who narrowly escaped the purges.

In a large and openly acknowledged crusader order, promotion is based on battlefield performance. The battlefield, however, is generously defined. It could be a political battlefield on which victory consists of the grant of the western valley's taxation rights from the Exchequer. It might also be a specific battlefield, such as the hedge prison of a demon prince in an ancient dungeon, where victory can be attained by thwarting the captive's attempts at escape. The battlefield could even be a spiritual one, where victory is the delivery of pilgrims to a holy site that will inspire them to new heights of religious fervor.

In a persecuted crusader order, promotion is often based simply on survival. New blood is vital and special, so a crusader who successfully recruits a reliable new member is accorded great honor. Many persecuted orders develop pyramidal hierarchies in which a member's recruits all rank below her in seniority.

### NPC REACTIONS

Many lay people cannot tell a crusader from a paladin until the latter calls his horse from the sky or lays hands on the maimed. Like paladins, crusaders of good alignment often become heroes to peasants, laborers, and others to whom gold is a dream and silver an always fleeting reality. Most nobles distrust crusaders because their beliefs take a higher priority in their lives than wealth and status. Paradoxically, most established clerics also distrust crusaders—not only because of faith-based rivalries but also because of the implicit acknowledgment that a crusader order could weaken the influence of nonaffiliated churches in a region's political landscape.

## CRUSADER LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) can research crusaders to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** Crusaders are hot-blooded zealots whose fervor is unrelieved by wisdom.

**DC 15:** Crusaders follow the Sublime Way, seeking to perfect their combat skill to better serve their deity. They're not like clerics, and they don't heal the sick or exorcise undead. Crusaders possess very little overt magic, unless you *consider* what they can do with their swords as magical.

**DC 20:** Crusaders can stand up to punishment that no other individual can endure, shrugging off even the most powerful of attacks.

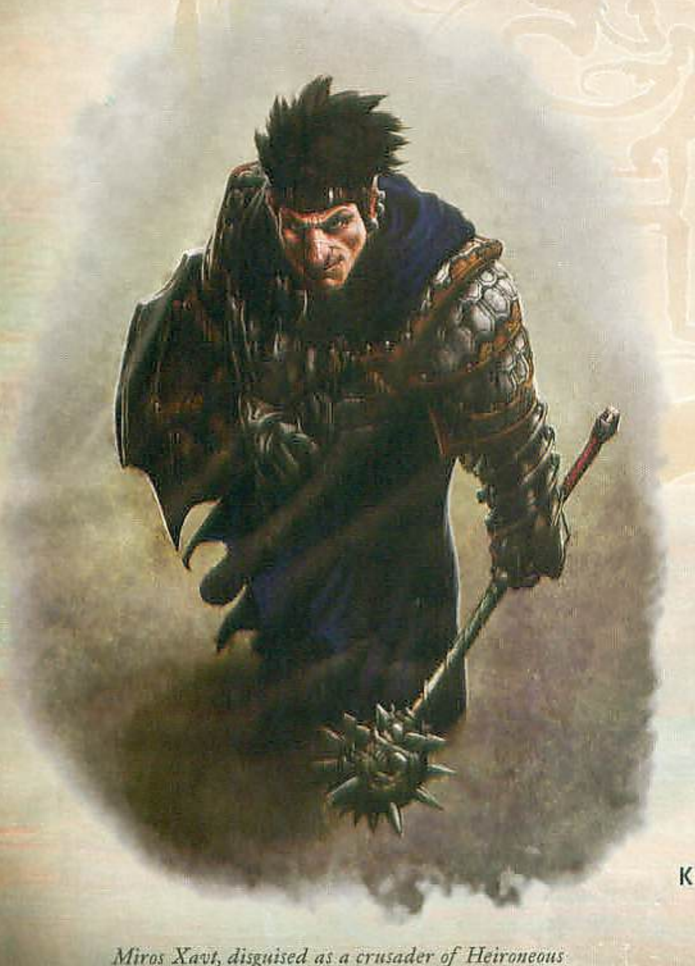
## CRUSADERS IN THE GAME

Depending on their alignment and disposition, crusaders can appear as allies or enemies, patrons or tyrants. You can use large crusader organizations to offer the PCs work guarding pilgrim caravans, retrieving items from a rival religion's vaults, or representing the organization at court. An evil crusader order might target the PCs' homeland for invasion or persecute all members of their race. The leader of an evil crusader order can make an excellent recurring villain for your campaign—especially if he uses his political clout to pass laws that make life difficult for the PCs. For example, he might institute 2-hour delays at the city gates, forbid foreigners to possess mithral and adamantine, require that all spellbooks be registered and copies stored at the owner's expense, or the like.

A crusader character expects that his combat prowess will aid the party in its fights and that his religious affiliation will have meaningful consequences in the game world. Accordingly, you should populate your encounters with monsters that oppose your crusader's ideals. Sketching out in advance how a campaign's important NPCs will react to zealot warriors is time well spent.

## ADAPTATION

One way to adapt crusaders is to remove the religious flavor from the class and replace it with regional or racial elements. In such an arrangement, a crusader would oppose creatures from enemy territory or of a different race. In like manner, her martial maneuvers would represent not catechisms of faith and divine magic, but a battle tradition of slayers handed down over the centuries.



Illus. by M. Phillips

*Miros Xavt, disguised as a crusader of Heironeous*

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Crusaders pursue their causes, whatever they might be, with an unmatched zeal. Any time the PCs become involved in an emotionally or politically charged adventure, a crusader might appear. A crusader is especially easy to introduce within the context of a church, as a holy (or unholy) knight dedicated to one distinct and specific aspect of his deity.

**EL 8:** Miros Xavt is a crusader of Erythnul, although he poses as a crusader of Heironeous shepherding a small flock of five human and seven dwarf pilgrims on a journey to the sacred site of Koshtra Amnorn, the highest peak in the Sunspire Mountains, and the inspiration for Reshar's lost epic poem explaining his motivations in unifying the Nine Paths. Miros is in fact leading a group of twelve disguised kenku marauders. They beg the PCs to join them and help escort them to the holy mount. Once out of sight of civilization, they throw off their cloaks and attack while screeching the praises of the God of Slaughter.

### MIROS XAVT, CRUSADER OF ERYTHNUL CR 4

Male human crusader 4
NE Medium humanoid
**Init** +4; **Senses** Spot +1, Listen +1
**Languages** Common

**AC** 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19
(+7 armor, +2 shield)
**hp** 29 (4 HD)
**Fort** +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3; zealous surge

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares), base speed 30 ft.
**Melee** mwk morningstar +9 (1d8+3)
**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +7
**Atk Options** furious counterstrike, steely resolve 10
**Combat Gear** 2 *potions of cure light wounds*

**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 4th):
*Stances*—martial spirit (1st), stonefoot stance (1st)
*Strikes*—charging minotaur† (1st), crusader's strike† (1st), douse the flames (1st), leading the attack† (1st), mountain hammer† (2nd), stone bones† (1st), vanguard strike (1st)
*Disciplines:* Devoted Spirit, Stone Dragon, White Raven
† Readied maneuver

**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13
**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar)
**Skills** Balance +6 (–1 in armor), Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Jump +9 (–4 in armor)
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+1 splint mail*, heavy steel shield, masterwork morningstar with blunt steel head painted to resemble Pelor's shining visage, light crossbow with 20 bolts

### KENKU SNEAKS (12) CR 1

See *Monster Manual III*, page 86. If you do not have *Monster Manual III*, use twelve disguised gnolls (*MM* 130).

# SWORDSAGE

*"Thick armor indicates a lack of skill. If you lack the training to avoid your enemies' blows, perhaps you should leave the fighting to me."*
—Chen, swordsage

A master of martial maneuvers, the swordsage is a physical adept—a blade wizard whose knowledge of the Sublime Way lets him unlock potent abilities, many of which are overtly supernatural or magical in nature. Depending on which disciplines he chooses to study, a swordsage might be capable of walking through walls, leaping dozens of feet into the air, shattering boulders with a single touch, or even mastering the elements of fire or shadow. Whatever his specific training, a swordsage blurs the line between martial prowess and magical skill.

## MAKING A SWORDSAGE

Despite his spectacular combat moves, a swordsage is not a typical front-line melee combatant. Although a fighter, barbarian, or warblade might swing a sword more accurately, or with greater force, a swordsage depends on his repertoire of martial strikes and stances. This character is also not intended to be a replacement for an arcane spellcaster, even though he can create a number of short-range area effects. A swordsage's role within an adventuring party isn't easily defined, but his combination of maneuverability, supernatural power, and martial arts is useful in almost any encounter.

**Abilities:** Dexterity and Wisdom are crucial to a swordsage. Since he wears only light armor, he must rely on agility and shrewdness to avoid attacks, and as such his Armor Class is augmented by his Wisdom modifier as well as his Dexterity modifier. A swordsage can get along with an average Wisdom score, but to excel, he wants a good Wisdom bonus. Since a swordsage often engages in melee, Strength is also important—although he can use the Weapon Finesse feat to overcome a low Strength score, and his array of martial strikes can make up for any lack of damage potential. Intelligence helps a swordsage master the skills necessary to continue progressing along the path of the Nine Swords, and Constitution is as important to him as it is to any character.

**Races:** Most swordsages are humans. It is not uncommon for members of other races to take up the path, though dwarves and gnomes rarely do. Dwarves are too firmly grounded to adapt easily to the ascetic lifestyle swordsages often favor, and the few dwarf swordsages who do exist typically focus on the Stone Dragon discipline. Gnomes find most swordsages singularly humorless, although members of this race occasionally take up the discipline of the Setting Sun, because they understand better than most how weakness can be turned to strength. Half-orcs account for a surprising number of swordsages, especially in the more warlike disciplines of Stone Dragon and Tiger Claw. Members of this race are well suited to endure the difficult physical regimen of study and practice that these disciplines require.

**Alignment:** A swordsage can choose any alignment. The study of the Sublime Way is its own end, and whether any particular student chooses to employ what he has learned in the service of good, evil, law, or chaos is not considered significant by most who follow this path. Accordingly, a typical swordsage has at least one neutral component in his alignment, representing a certain detachment from worldly matters. Good swordsages tend to be free-roaming champions of the weak and downtrodden. The less commonplace evil swordsages believe that their mastery of the martial arts has made them superior to everyone around them.

**Starting Gold:** 4d4×10 (100 gp).

**Starting Age:** As monk.

## CLASS FEATURES

Of all three martial adept classes, swordsages learn and can ready the most maneuvers. This advantage gives them unparalleled versatility in a given encounter. In one battle, a swordsage might fulfill the role of the rogue, lurking in shadows and striking when foes are least prepared. In another, he might be scorching enemies with area attacks, much like a wizard. In still another fight, he might tear an enemy apart with his bare hands, matching a barbarian's ferocity with his own distinctive style of bloodthirstiness. Whatever the occasion, a swordsage is able to contribute, often in completely unexpected ways.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** As a swordsage, you are proficient with simple weapons, martial melee weapons (including those that can be used as thrown weapons), and light armor, but not with shields.

**Maneuvers:** You begin your career with knowledge of six martial maneuvers. The disciplines available to you are Desert Wind, Diamond Mind, Setting Sun, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon, and Tiger Claw.

Once you know a maneuver, you must ready it before you can use it (see Maneuvers Readied, below). A maneuver usable by swordsages is considered an extraordinary ability unless otherwise noted in its description. Your maneuvers are not affected by spell resistance, and you do not provoke attacks of opportunity when you initiate one.

You learn additional maneuvers at higher levels, as shown on Table 1–2. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. See Table 3–1, page 39, to determine the highest-level maneuvers you can learn.

Upon reaching 4th level, and at every even-numbered swordsage level after that (6th, 8th, 10th, and so on), you can choose to learn a new maneuver in place of one you already know. In effect, you lose the old maneuver in exchange for the new one. You can choose a new maneuver of any level you like, as long as you observe your restriction on the highest-level maneuvers you know; you need not replace the old maneuver with a maneuver of the same level. For example, upon reaching 10th level, you could trade in a single 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd- or 4th-level maneuver for a maneuver of 5th level or lower, as long as you meet the prerequisite of the new maneuver. You can swap only a single maneuver at any given level.

**Maneuvers Readied:** You can ready four of your six maneuvers known at 1st level, and as you advance in level and learn more maneuvers, you are able to ready more, but you must still choose which maneuvers to ready. You ready your maneuvers by meditating and exercising for 5 minutes. The maneuvers you choose remain readied until you decide

**TABLE 1–2: THE SWORDSAGE HIT DIE: D8**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +2 | +2 | Quick to act +1, discipline focus (Weapon Focus) | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +3 | +3 | AC bonus | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 3rd | +2 | +1 | +3 | +3 | — | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| 4th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +4 | Discipline focus (insightful strike) | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 5th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +4 | Quick to act +2 | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| 6th | +4 | +2 | +5 | +5 | — | 11 | 6 | 3 |
| 7th | +5 | +2 | +5 | +5 | Sense magic | 12 | 6 | 3 |
| 8th | +6/+1 | +2 | +6 | +6 | Discipline focus (defensive stance) | 13 | 7 | 3 |
| 9th | +6/+1 | +3 | +6 | +6 | Evasion | 14 | 7 | 4 |
| 10th | +7/+2 | +3 | +7 | +7 | Quick to act +3 | 15 | 8 | 4 |
| 11th | +8/+3 | +3 | +7 | +7 | — | 16 | 8 | 4 |
| 12th | +9/+4 | +4 | +8 | +8 | Discipline focus (insightful strike) | 17 | 8 | 4 |
| 13th | +10/+5 | +4 | +8 | +8 | — | 18 | 9 | 4 |
| 14th | +10/+5 | +4 | +9 | +9 | — | 19 | 9 | 5 |
| 15th | +11/+6/+1 | +5 | +9 | +9 | Quick to act +4 | 20 | 10 | 5 |
| 16th | +12/+7/+2 | +5 | +10 | +10 | Discipline focus (defensive stance) | 21 | 10 | 5 |
| 17th | +13/+8/+3 | +5 | +10 | +10 | Improved evasion | 22 | 10 | 5 |
| 18th | +13/+8/+3 | +6 | +11 | +11 | — | 23 | 11 | 5 |
| 19th | +14/+9/+4 | +6 | +11 | +11 | — | 24 | 11 | 5 |
| 20th | +15/+10/+5 | +6 | +12 | +12 | Dual boost 3/day, quick to act +5 | 25 | 12 | 6 |

**Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level, ×6 at 1st level):** Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Listen, Martial Lore*, Move Silently, Profession, Ride, Sense Motive, Swim, Tumble.

*New skill described on page 28.

to meditate again and change them. You need not sleep or rest for any long period of time to ready your maneuvers; any time you spend 5 minutes in meditation, you can change your readied maneuvers.

You begin an encounter with all your readied maneuvers unexpended, regardless of how many times you might have already used them since you chose them. When you initiate a maneuver, you expend it for the current encounter, so each of your readied maneuvers can be used once per encounter (unless you recover them, as described below).

You can recover an expended maneuver by using a full-round action to quickly meditate. Doing this does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If you complete your meditation, you can choose one expended maneuver to refresh. It is now available for use in a subsequent round.

**Stances Known:** You begin play with knowledge of one 1st-level stance from any discipline open to you. At 2nd, 5th, 9th, 14th, and 20th level, you can choose additional stances. Unlike maneuvers, stances are not expended, and you do not have to ready them. All the stances you know are available to you at all times, and you can change the stance you currently use as a swift action. A stance is an extraordinary ability unless otherwise stated in the stance description.

Unlike with maneuvers, you cannot learn a new stance at higher levels in place of one you already know.

**AC Bonus:** Starting at 2nd level, you can add your Wisdom modifier as a bonus to Armor Class, so long as you wear light armor, are unencumbered, and do not use a shield. This bonus to AC applies even against touch attacks or when you are flat-footed. However, you lose this bonus when you are immobilized or helpless.

**Discipline Focus (Ex):** As a swordsage, you can focus your training to take advantage of each discipline's fighting style. Each time you gain the discipline focus ability, select one of the six swordsage disciplines to which that focus applies. You can select a different discipline each time you gain discipline focus, but you must know at least one martial maneuver from the selected discipline. Even if you select a different discipline at higher levels, your discipline choice for earlier abilities does not change.

This focus manifests in the following ways.

*Weapon Focus:* At 1st level, you gain the benefit of the Weapon Focus feat for weapons associated with the chosen discipline. See the discipline descriptions in Chapter 4.

*Insightful Strikes:* At 4th level, you can add your Wisdom modifier as a bonus on damage rolls whenever you execute a strike from the chosen discipline. At 12th level, you can choose a second discipline to which this ability applies.

*Defensive Stance:* At 8th level, you gain a +2 bonus on saving throws whenever you adopt a stance from the chosen discipline. At 16th level, you can choose a second discipline to which this ability applies.

You gain a +2 bonus on Martial Lore checks made regarding a maneuver in a discipline in which you have discipline focus.

**Quick to Act (Ex):** You gain a +1 bonus on initiative checks. This bonus increases by 1 at 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th level.

**Sense Magic (Su):** Beginning at 7th level, you can spend 10 minutes focusing upon a weapon or suit of armor. If you succeed on a level check (DC 10 + the caster level of the weapon or armor), you can identify the properties of that item, including its enhancement bonus and special abilities. This ability does not reveal the properties of artifacts or legacy weapons, though it does indicate that such items are significantly powerful.

**Evasion (Ex):** At 9th level, you can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If you make a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals damage on a successful save, you instead take no damage. Evasion can be used only if you are wearing light armor or no armor. If you are helpless, you do not gain the benefit of evasion.

**Improved Evasion (Ex):** From 17th level on, you gain the benefit of improved evasion. You still take no damage if you make a successful Reflex save against an attack, and even if you fail the Reflex save, you take only half damage from the attack. If you are helpless, you do not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

**Dual Boost (Ex):** When you reach 20th level, you can use two boost maneuvers simultaneously. Whenever you initiate a boost maneuver, you can also initiate any other boost maneuver that you know as a free action. Both boosts you initiate are expended normally. You can use this ability three times per day.

## PLAYING A SWORDSAGE

To you, a sword is not simply a sharpened length of steel. It is the wisdom of the smith, the fire of the forge, and the shouts and ringing blows of your battles. It is your teacher and your student, your life and your death. When your mind is tempered like the blade, no feat of combat prowess is beyond you. You can run on the weapons of your foes, strike an enemy unseen, and flip insouciantly away from the frustrated riposte. Through it all, you seek to understand the secret knowledge of combat. Every blow is a revelation, and every wound an apocalypse. In the end, you and your sword are nothing without each other.

*Eskelior Deftfoot the swordsage*

You and your fellow swordsages adventure for a plethora of reasons. Neither the religious fervor of the crusader nor the honor quest of the warblade causes you to travel the world. More than faith, more than glory, you seek truth. Whether you find that truth in the burbling acid swamps south of the Deluge Jungle, in a screeching jungle harpy roost, or in the gullet of a purple worm, you are driven to uncover it, learn it, and master it.

### RELIGION

Religion might be entirely immaterial to you, or you might find comfort in the existence of the Upper (or Lower) Planes. If you are among the minority of swordsages who revere a deity, you worship one who is remote and generally refrains from meddling in the lives of mortals. Boccob the Uncaring is a favorite among your fellow swordsages. A few, however, choose to worship the Shalm, Obad-Hai, because his neutrality aligns well with the swordsage notion that the truth of steel is not what you want it to be, but simply what it is.

### OTHER CLASSES

You have learned to look past the profession and see the individual, finding more truth in a person's deeds than in her abilities. Once you have ascertained the measure of her soul, you consider her profession and skills. You prize other martial adepts—especially other swordsages—as friends and allies, both for their combat prowess and for their ability to play to each other's strengths. Flanking rogues are also valuable allies in battle. Clerics and arcane casters are invaluable companions, but you resent spellcasters who cast area spells, *wall* spells, or similar dweomers that alter the battlefield and limit your mobility and options.

### COMBAT

Rather than rushing into combat with the mindless rage of a barbarian or the foolhardy courage of a warblade, you assess your opponents and try to achieve tactical supremacy through position and martial maneuvers. Your lack of armor proficiency means that you are best suited to a skirmish-style attack—one in which you can use your high mobility to flank an enemy and strike hard and fast. However, you are perfectly capable of standing toe to talon with vrocks and wyverns when necessary, parrying fang with blade and using your martial maneuvers to cut a path through your enemy's front ranks.

You have access to an amazing array of powerful martial maneuvers. You have exclusive access to the Desert Wind, Shadow Hand, and Setting Sun disciplines, and you would do well to learn at least some maneuvers from these. You have the greatest range of maneuvers of any martial adept, so you should have multiple strikes, counters, stances, and boosts available after just a few levels in the class.

### ADVANCEMENT

Your training began when you won an apprenticeship with a mentor—either an individual hermit swordsage or an instructor at an ancient swordsage temple dating back to the Battle of the Shadow Tiger Horde. You knew that winning

Illus. by S. Ellis

a swordsage apprenticeship would not be easy—that in fact, it would be an ordeal designed to test your worth in some unusual way.

The masters of the Harad Devin Temple are known to make the young boys and girls wishing to undertake training wait in the courtyard for seasons on end, through rain, snow, and the acid cloud storms of reth dekala attacks. Occasionally the masters might send a pot of porridge to the courtyard for the aspirants, and even more occasionally—never more than once per season—they select one child to enter through the Ivory and Horn Gates. The Eighty Empresses have a different selection process for their protégés. The masters bring each young lady separately into the Dressing Room of Opala I, whose walls, mirrors, incense lamps, pots of rouge, and songbird cages are draped with 1,080 shimmering gold, red, pink, orange, and fuchsia silk ribbons. The girl is allowed to stay as long as she likes in the dressing room; she has but to give a signal when she is ready to leave. After she is led away, one ribbon is removed from the room. Then she is brought back. If she can name the color of the ribbon that was removed, she is accepted; otherwise, she is turned away forever.

As a swordsage, your selection of disciplines and martial maneuvers is paramount to your success. You might choose to focus on maneuvers from a single discipline, but learning a few maneuvers from the other schools is almost always advisable. True success in combat requires a wide variety of martial maneuvers.

## HUMAN SWORDSAGE STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Studded leather (+3 AC, armor check penalty –1, speed 30 ft., 20 lb.).

**Weapons:** Longsword (1d8, crit 19–20/×2, 4 lb., one-handed slashing).

Light crossbow (1d8, crit 19–20, range inc. 80 ft., 4 lb., piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Pick a number of skills equal to 6 + Int modifier.

| Skill | Ranks | Ability | Armor Check Penalty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Balance | 4 | Dex | –1 |
| Concentration | 4 | Con | — |
| Heal | 4 | Wis | — |
| Hide | 4 | Dex | –1 |
| Intimidate | 4 | Cha | — |
| Jump | 4 | Str | –1 |
| Knowledge (local) | 4 | Int | — |
| Martial Lore | 4 | Int | — |
| Move Silently | 4 | Dex | –1 |
| Ride | 4 | Dex | — |
| Sense Motive | 4 | Wis | — |
| Spot (cc) | 2 | Wis | — |
| Tumble | 4 | Dex | –1 |

**Feat:** Dodge.

**Bonus Feat:** Improved Initiative.

**Gear:** Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 3 torches, quiver with 20 arrows, tent, traveler's outfit, cold weather outfit.

**Gold:** 2d4 gp.

# SWORDSAGES IN THE WORLD

> *"I could smell the jasmine perfume lingering in the torchlight. The Eighty Empresses had entered the castle here, through this door. The sentinel, crumpled on the parapet, was still smiling."*
>
> —Kalin Stonehelm, castellan of Orlep Tor

The pontificating recluse, the wandering mystic, the martial scholar—all these and more are swordsages. These martial adepts bring a combination of mental acumen and physical prowess to the world. With a potential to advance in a number of different directions—offensive, defensive, support, and quick-strike—they make excellent additions to adventuring parties. When the campaign action veers out of the dungeon and into the royal courts, darkened chambers, and diplomatic halls of the kingdom, a swordsage's inclination toward intellectual pursuits and his natural role as a scholar—martial and otherwise—allow him to remain a strong contributor to the party.

## DAILY LIFE

A swordsage spends the majority of his time perfecting his art. The mental and spiritual demands of the Sublime Way require constant attention, so he can spare little time for carousing.

Art in all its forms is often a passion for swordsages. Many find refreshment and a wellspring of strength in the arts of sculpting, painting, poetry, calligraphy, rock-stacking, or illusory patterns.

A swordsage with an apprentice spends much of his time training his student. A swordsage without an apprentice might or might not spend time seeking one out, according to his whims.

## NOTABLES

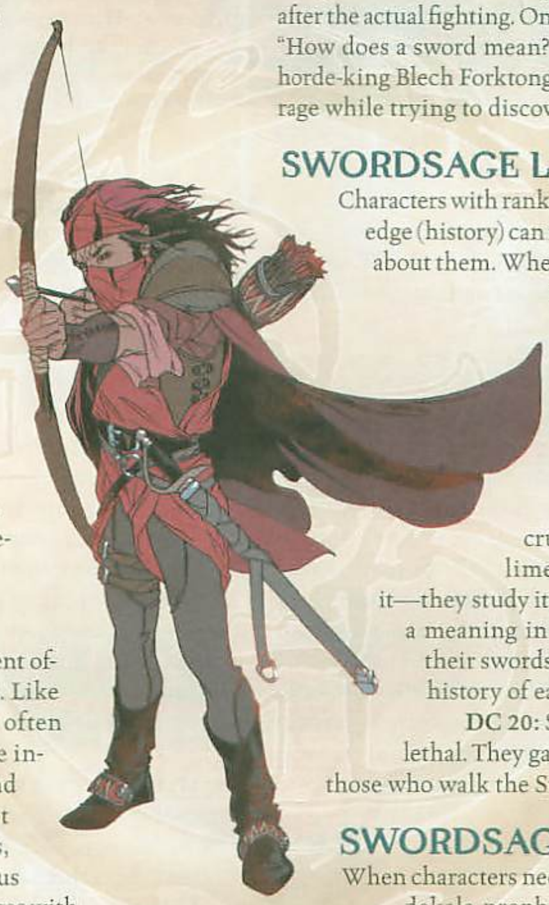
Opala I, the Empress Incarnadine and founder of the Eighty Empresses, was a swordsage. Known as much for her wisdom, her dance, and her ribbons as for her swords, she is regarded by many as the prototypical swordsage—serene, poised, and deadly. Modern notable swordsages include the Sage of Snow and Shadow, who lives at the peak of one of the Sunspires near Koshtra Amnorn, and Skurrgh, a half-orc pariah who is shunned by his native tribe for questioning the unmitigated war frenzy dictated by the shamans of He Who Watches. Skurrgh is presently looking for an apprentice but has yet to find one he considers suitable. Many of the more dedicated aspirants prefer to wait in the rain and snow outside the Harad Devin Temple rather than risk their training on a rogue half-orc.

## ORGANIZATIONS

The Harad Devin Temple has recruited and trained swordsages for centuries. Many of its alumni wear intricate tattoos or brands on the inside of their forearms that record fragments of the order's history. It is said that if all the sages of the Harad Devin Temple were to line up, one could read the entire history of the Sunspire Mountains and Deluge Jungle regions from their tattoos, and that their brands are sigils that can unlock a spell of epic proportions.

The women of the Eighty Empresses also carry the marks of their order, which in this case are ribbons. Each young lady who wins acceptance to the order adopts the ribbon from her induction ceremony as her personal symbol. Unlike the markings associated with the Harad Devin Temple, no legend connects the ribbons of the Eighty Empresses with any greater epic. In fact, these decorations appear to have no meaning at all. No color, braidwork, or fringe signifies rank within the order, and no particular manner of display—hairbow, choker, or wristband—has any meaning beyond the preference of the individual member.

Many other swordsage organizations exist as well. The typical order is a small, well-organized, organic unit that exists for a single purpose. One swordsage organization might focus on the history of a particular combat style, while another is sworn to protect the ruler of a local population. At least one swordsage organization has devoted itself to studying the combat techniques, migratory patterns, and warren culture of the Sunspire Mountain umber hulks, presumably with an eye toward eventually exterminating them. Such daunting tasks are typical fare for swordsages, whose patience and calmness often lead them to consider plans that might take decades or even centuries to execute.



*Crimson Mask, champion of the downtrodden*

## NPC REACTIONS

Most authority figures and government officials do not appreciate swordsages. Like crusaders, these martial adepts are often dedicated to a higher cause than the interests of the local earl or lord, and unlike warblades, swordsages are not easily bought. Thus, governments, churches, and other civic and religious organizations generally treat swordsages with a great deal of caution.

Merchants, on the other hand, embrace swordsages. Who else would buy an ancient coin, the chipped comb of a long-dead princess, or a petrified dragon claw? In addition to purchasing curiosities and art supplies particular to his interests, a swordsage also provides business for smiths, carpenters, and stablers as he practices his martial maneuvers in an effort to maintain a constant state of patient readiness.

## RACES

Elves and swordsages often get along famously because of their similar long-term viewpoints and their appreciation for history. Dwarves appreciate the serious nature of swordsages and the fine sculpture that many of them produce. Gnomes have a love–hate relationship with these masters of martial knowledge: They appreciate the swordsages' sense of history and love of bardic arts but dislike their tendency to take life seriously. Half-elves often dislike swordsages, seeing in their selective apprenticeship process an echo of the exclusionary attitude that those of mixed blood sometimes experience.

## OTHER CLASSES

Swordsages tend to have more in common with clerics and wizards than with the melee fighting classes. Barbarians in particular are apt to be annoyed by a swordsage's proclivity to analyze or at least contemplate a combat before, during, and after the actual fighting. One of Opala's favorite questions was, "How does a sword mean?" It is said that the orc barbarian horde-king Blech Forktongue slew twenty subchieftains in a rage while trying to discover the meaning of that question.

## SWORDSAGE LORE

Characters with ranks in Gather Information or Knowledge (history) can research swordsages to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** A swordsage is a fancy sword-swinger who thinks he knows more about swordplay than anyone else.

**DC 15:** Like warblades and crusaders, swordsages walk the Sublime Way. But they don't just walk it—they study it, they search it, they think there's a meaning in it. They look for the wisdom of their swords, the story of each swing, and the history of each foe.

**DC 20:** Swordsages are patient, calm, and lethal. They gain the most mystical powers of all those who walk the Sublime Way.

## SWORDSAGES IN THE GAME

When characters need to know the truename of a reth dekala prophet, the resting place of the last lieutenant of the Shadow Tiger Horde, or the secrets of the Perfect Strike, they are likely to seek out a swordsage. Such moments provide excellent opportunities to introduce swordsages into an ongoing campaign that has not previously included martial adepts. If a player wants to play a swordsage in such a campaign, the character might be sought out by an ancient swordsage—the last practitioner of his kind—and taught the secrets of the Sublime Way. If you are using *Dungeon Master's Guide II*, a PC could acquire a spirit companion—the spirit of an ancient swordsage who has selected her to be the first in a new generation of martial scholars.

When developing a swordsage character, consider his focus. Does he define himself by his martial maneuvers, his art, and his relationships with NPCs? Provide a swordsage with challenges to all facets of his character. His high skill points,

*Illus. by K. Andrasofszky*

excellent combat abilities, and magical flair ensure that he is equally at home in a dungeon, in the halls of a palace, and in a wizard's tower. A good enemy for a swordsage is one against whom he must use all his skills, all his maneuvers, and all his knowledge.

## ADAPTATION

The name "swordsage" naturally implies a character who carries a sword or weapon of some kind. However, a swordsage works very well as a supernatural martial artist of almost any school or origin. To create a monklike character with a tremendous array of fantastic moves and strikes, give the swordsage the monk's unarmed strike progression and remove his light armor proficiency. If you prefer, you could instead emphasize the magical talents of the swordsage by giving the swordsage the ability to learn arcane spells in place of maneuvers of equivalent level. In general, spells from the schools of abjuration, evocation, and transmutation are most appropriate for a swordsage of this type, especially spells with a range of personal or touch. The arcane spell is "cast" as if it were a martial maneuver. In this case, you should remove the class's light armor proficiency and reduce the swordsage's Hit Die to d6.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Swordsages can be encountered anywhere: in large cities, in the wilderness, or on the road to nowhere.

**EL 6:** The highwayman known as the Crimson Mask plagues the roads and pathways near the Free City. By drawing on the power of his martial maneuvers, he swoops in to surprise his enemies, fights them to the brink of defeat, demands a ransom to cease his attack, then disappears back into the forest. Crimson Mask is, in truth, a worshiper of Olidammara who seeks to steal from rich adventurers and distribute the money to the needy. He cares little whether he steals from a heroic paladin or a heartless mercenary because he feels that neither is likely to do anything useful with the money. Thus, he has no compunctions about taking it.

### CRIMSON MASK CR 6

Male half-elf swordsage 6
CG Medium humanoid (elf)
**Init** +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +5
**Languages** Common, Elven

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16
(Dex +2, Wis +1, armor +5)
**hp** 49 (6 HD)
**Immune** sleep
**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7 (+9 against enchantments)

**Speed** 30 ft.
**Melee** mwk scimitar +7 (1d6+2/18–20)
**Ranged** longbow +6 (1d8/×3)
**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +6
**Atk Options** discipline focus (insightful strike—Desert Wind)
**Combat Gear** 2 *potions of cure light wounds*

**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 6th):
*Stances*—child of shadow (1st), flame's blessing (1st), holocaust cloak (3rd)
*Strikes*—blistering flourish† (1st), charging minotaur† (1st), death mark† (3rd), shadow blade technique (1st), stone bones (1st)
*Boosts*—burning blade (1st), burning brand† (2nd), distracting ember (1st), wind stride (1st)
*Counters*—fire riposte† (2nd), zephyr dance† (3rd)
*Disciplines:* Desert Wind, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon
† Readied maneuver

**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
**SQ** able to notice secret or concealed doors
**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (scimitar, light mace, light pick, spear, falchion)$^{B}$
**Skills** Balance +13, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +13, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Sense Motive +10, Spot +5, Tumble +13
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+2 studded leather*, masterwork scimitar, *cloak of resistance +1*, longbow with 20 arrows

# WARBLADE

*"I was born for war. I have the heart of a lion, the swiftness of an eagle, and the strength of a dragon! In battle I find purpose, in conflict perfection, and in victory exaltation. The gods themselves envy my hour of glory."*

—Arzimon, a warblade

The warblade was born for conflict. Swift, strong, enduring, and utterly confident in his martial skills, he seeks to test himself against worthy foes. Battle is beautiful to him—a perfect moment in which life hangs suspended on the bright edge of a sword. Sheer combat skill is important to a warblade, so he trains intensely with his chosen weapons. But even more important are his athleticism, endurance, daring, recklessness, and joy in the hour of danger. Warblades, often called sword princes, live for the chance to test themselves in battle—the stronger the foe, the greater the glory once an enemy is defeated.

## MAKING A WARBLADE

A warblade is a front-line melee combatant, much like a barbarian or fighter. He engages his enemies toe to toe and defeats them through skill at arms.

**Abilities:** Pure physical perfection is a warblade's ideal, so Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution are all vital to him. Because mastering a bewildering variety of martial maneuvers is difficult, Intelligence is also important to a warblade, because he appreciates the bonus skill points, and many of his class features reward a high Intelligence bonus. Given the choice between Wisdom and Charisma, a warblade is more likely to boost the latter—the better to wear the mantle of glory he hopes to win with his deeds on the battlefield.

**Races:** The warrior cultures that give rise to warblades are most often found in human, elf, and hobgoblin lands. Admiration for athletic prowess, the martial ideal, and sheer physical daring is common among these races. The githyanki also take great pride in their martial skill, and a number of warblades can be found among this race. Dwarves appreciate a warblade's martial prowess but might shy away from over-

**TABLE 1–3: THE WARBLADE** **HIT DIE: D12**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Battle clarity (Reflex saves), weapon aptitude | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | Uncanny dodge | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | Battle ardor (critical confirmation) | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | — | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Bonus feat | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 6th | +6/+1 | +5 | +2 | +2 | Improved uncanny dodge | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 7th | +7/+2 | +5 | +2 | +2 | Battle cunning (damage) | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 8th | +8/+3 | +6 | +2 | +2 | — | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| 9th | +9/+4 | +6 | +3 | +3 | Bonus feat | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| 10th | +10/+5 | +7 | +3 | +3 | — | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| 11th | +11/+6/+1 | +7 | +3 | +3 | Battle skill (opposed checks) | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| 12th | +12/+7/+2 | +8 | +4 | +4 | — | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| 13th | +13/+8/+3 | +8 | +4 | +4 | Bonus feat | 10 | 5 | 3 |
| 14th | +14/+9/+4 | +9 | +4 | +4 | — | 10 | 5 | 3 |
| 15th | +15/+10/+5 | +9 | +5 | +5 | Battle mastery (attacks of opportunity) | 11 | 6 | 3 |
| 16th | +16/+11/+6/+1 | +10 | +5 | +5 | — | 11 | 6 | 4 |
| 17th | +17/+12/+7/+2 | +10 | +5 | +5 | Bonus feat | 12 | 6 | 4 |
| 18th | +18/+13/+8/+3 | +11 | +6 | +6 | — | 12 | 6 | 4 |
| 19th | +19/+14/+9/+4 | +11 | +6 | +6 | — | 13 | 6 | 4 |
| 20th | +20/+15/+10/+5 | +12 | +6 | +6 | Stance mastery | 13 | 7 | 4 |

**Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level, ×4 at 1st level):** Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Martial Lore*, Swim, Tumble.

*New skill described on page 28.

weening praise. Halflings generally admire athletic prowess, but most find the stringent requirements of this class too challenging. Half-orcs and savage humanoid races generally do not appreciate beauty in motion in quite the same way that their more civilized counterparts do; they fight to destroy their enemies, not to cover themselves in glory. Gnomes feel no particular need to try themselves in battle; they are happy with their normal pursuits.

**Alignment:** A warblade can choose any alignment, though many prefer chaotic over lawful. After all, a warblade seeks to win glory through individual deeds of prowess, so he is unlikely to adopt a personal code emphasizing obedience over freedom to improvise. Good warblades are champions of the weak and downtrodden; evil ones are vicious warlords who exult in the defeat and humiliation of their foes.

**Starting Gold:** 5d4×10 (125 gp).

**Starting Age:** As barbarian.

## CLASS FEATURES

When fighting, you rely on an ever-increasing repertoire of spectacular martial maneuvers. Depending on which disciplines you choose to study, you might be a mongoose-swift skirmisher who uses speed as your sword and shield, a fierce master of blades, or a bold commander who leads your allies into battle. Your maneuvers are the signature moves that serve to define your character.

Regardless of the path you choose, you acquire a modest number of bonus feats that make you quicker, more agile, and more athletic than most other warriors.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** You are proficient with simple and martial melee weapons (including those that can be used as thrown weapons), light and medium armor, and all shields except tower shields.

**Maneuvers:** You begin your career with knowledge of three martial maneuvers. The disciplines available to you are Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw, and White Raven.

Once you know a maneuver, you must ready it before you can use it (see Maneuvers Readied, below). A maneuver usable by warblades is considered an extraordinary ability unless otherwise noted in its description. Your maneuvers are not affected by spell resistance, and you do not provoke attacks of opportunity when you initiate one.

You learn additional maneuvers at higher levels, as shown on Table 1–3. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. See Table 3–1, page 39, to determine the highest-level maneuvers you can learn.

Upon reaching 4th level, and at every even-numbered warblade level after that (6th, 8th, 10th, and so on), you can choose to learn a new maneuver in place of one you already know. In effect, you lose the old maneuver in exchange for the new one. You can choose a new maneuver of any level you like, as long as you observe your restriction on the highest-level maneuvers you know; you need not replace the old maneuver with a maneuver of the same level. For example, upon reaching 10th level, you could trade in a single 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd- or 4th-level maneuver for a maneuver of 5th level or lower, as long as you meet the prerequisite of the new maneuver. You can swap only a single maneuver at any given level.

**Maneuvers Readied:** You can ready all three of the maneuvers you know at 1st level, but as you advance in level and learn more maneuvers, you must choose which maneuvers to ready. You ready your maneuvers by exercising for 5 minutes. The maneuvers you choose remain readied until you decide to exercise again and change them. You need not sleep or rest for any long period of time to ready your maneuvers;

any time you spend 5 minutes in practice, you can change your readied maneuvers.

You begin an encounter with all your readied maneuvers unexpended, regardless of how many times you might have already used them since you chose them. When you initiate a maneuver, you expend it for the current encounter, so each of your readied maneuvers can be used once per encounter (until you recover them, as described below).

You can recover all expended maneuvers with a single swift action, which must be immediately followed in the same round with a melee attack or using a standard action to do nothing else in the round (such as executing a quick, harmless flourish with your weapon). You cannot initiate a maneuver or change your stance while you are recovering your expended maneuvers, but you can remain in a stance in which you began your turn.

**Stances Known:** You begin play with knowledge of one 1st-level stance from any discipline open to warblades. At 4th, 10th, and 16th level, you can choose additional stances. Unlike maneuvers, stances are not expended, and you do not have to ready them. All the stances you know are available to you at all times, and you can change the stance you are currently using as a swift action. A stance is an extraordinary ability unless otherwise stated in the stance description.

*Arzimon the warblade*

Unlike with maneuvers, you cannot learn a new stance at higher levels in place of one you already know.

**Battle Clarity (Ex):** You can enter a state of almost mystical awareness of the battlefield around you. As long as you are not flat-footed, you gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus (maximum equals your warblade level) on your Reflex saves.

**Weapon Aptitude (Ex):** Your training with a wide range of weaponry and tactics gives you great skill with particular weapons. You qualify for feats that usually require a minimum number of fighter levels (such as Weapon Specialization) as if you had a fighter level equal to your warblade level –2. For example, as a 6th-level warblade, you could take Weapon Specialization, since you're treated as being a 4th-level fighter for this purpose. These effective fighter levels stack with any actual fighter levels you have. Thus, a fighter 2/warblade 4 would also qualify for Weapon Specialization.

You also have the flexibility to adjust your weapon training. Each morning, you can spend 1 hour in weapon practice to change the designated weapon for any feat you have that applies only to a single weapon (such as Weapon Focus). You must have the newly designated weapon available during your practice session to make this change. For example, if you wish to change the designated weapon for your Weapon Focus feat from greatsword to longsword, you must have a longsword available to practice with during your practice session.

You can adjust any number of your feats in this way, and you don't have to adjust them all in the same way. However, you can't change the weapon choices in such a way that you no longer meet the prerequisite for some other feat you possess. For instance, if you have both Weapon Focus (longsword) and Weapon Specialization (longsword), you can't change the designated weapon for Weapon Focus unless you also change the weapon for Weapon Specialization in the same way.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** At 2nd level, you gain the ability to react to danger before your senses would normally allow you to do so. You retain your Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if you are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, you still lose your Dexterity bonus to AC if you are immobilized.

If you already have uncanny dodge from a different class (barbarian or rogue, for example), you automatically gain improved uncanny dodge (see below) instead.

**Battle Ardor (Ex):** The sheer love of battle lends uncanny strength to your blows. Starting at 3rd level, you gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus on rolls made to confirm critical hits.

**Bonus Feat:** At 5th level, you gain a bonus feat from the list given below. You must meet the prerequisite for the feat you select. Every four levels thereafter (at 9th, 13th, and 17th level), you choose another bonus feat from the list.

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*Bonus Feat List:* Acrobatic, Agile, Athletic, Blade Meditation*, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Ironheart*, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Run, Stone Power*, Tiger Blooded*, Unnerving Calm*, White Raven Defense*.

*New feats described in Chapter 2.

**Battle Cunning (Ex):** Your instinct for seizing the moment gives you a significant advantage over foes unprepared for your attack. At 7th level, you gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus on melee damage rolls against flat-footed or flanked opponents.

**Battle Skill (Ex):** You anticipate your enemies' ploys and tactics. At 11th level, you gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus on any check made to oppose an enemy's bull rush, disarm, feint, overrun, sunder, or trip attempt.

**Battle Mastery (Ex):** You notice the most subtle openings and cues offered by your opponents. At 15th level, you gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus on melee attack rolls and melee damage rolls made whenever you make an attack of opportunity.

**Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** At 6th level and higher, you can no longer be flanked; you can react to opponents on opposite sides of you as easily as you can react to a single attacker. See the barbarian class feature (PH 26) for more information.

**Stance Mastery (Ex):** At 20th level, you can have two stances active simultaneously. When you use a swift action to initiate or change your stance, you can initiate or change one or both stances.

## PLAYING A WARBLADE

Mastering the techniques of blade and shield is important to you, but even more important is the sense of daring, recklessness, and even joy that transports you in the hour of danger. You fight for glory, the thrill of combat, and personal honor. Thus, you approach each encounter as if the bards will sing of it for ages. Every raging bulette that breaks through the cobblestones in the bazaar, every dragon snarling on its pile of coin, and every reth dekala champion still carrying a sword of the Shadow Tiger horde is an opportunity for you to test your skill, prove your heroism, and shine ever brighter. Gold and magic are pleasant tokens, but the real measure of your success is the height of the obelisk commemorating your triumphs.

As a warblade, you find adventure wherever an opportunity for glory exists. A more mercenary character might ignore an impecunious burgomaster's plea for aid, but you are quick to step in, taking the accolades of the villagers and the rapture of combat as pay along with a small bit of gold. Diplomatic missions have all the appeal of weak tea for you, but nearly any fight will do. Even a quick hunt through the sewers for a rabid otyugh can become a suitable adventure, as long as the otyugh is a worthy opponent and some townsfolk are present to honor you when you emerge, slime-covered but victorious.

### RELIGION

If you are good-aligned, you probably worship Kord. His independent and amiably belligerent nature reflects your brash approach to life. Other good warblades favor Pelor, Heironeous, and, in rare cases, dour St. Cuthbert. If you are evil, you probably champion the cause of Erythnul or Hextor. A rumored secret sect of warblades follows Vecna, claiming to be the descendants of the loyal army that watched horrified as its commander, Kas, committed his famous betrayal.

### OTHER CLASSES

Because you appreciate the long years of study and practice necessary to become a master of combat, you have great respect for fighters and paladins—though you sometimes feel a rivalry with them, as well. You don't get along too well with barbarians because they seem incapable of properly bestowing or receiving honor. Bards are among your favorite companions as long as they stay out of the way and leave the glory of the fight to you—and sing of your success later in tavern and hall. Both divine and arcane spellcasters are foreign to your pursuit of physical perfection, so you see them as little more than a means of support for your own endeavors. For that matter, you rarely work well with other warblades, since they are as competitive as you are, and you're always suspicious that one of them might try to steal your glory.

### COMBAT

You revel in melee. Your place is battling face to face with vrocks and umber hulks, where you can deal maximum damage while keeping such monsters away from the softer targets in your own party. You make good use of your various battle-keyed abilities to give yourself an important edge in combat. Although these abilities might not be as physically impressive as a barbarian's rage, they can grant a significant boost to defense, as well as situational bonuses on attack and damage rolls. Unlike rage, your class features carry no fatigue penalty. Your lack of proficiency with heavy armor is both a blessing and a curse—it allows you to enter combat quickly but leaves you vulnerable to the enemy. Consider taking feats such as Improved Toughness (see *Complete Warrior*) to increase your ability to soak up damage and partially offset your lack of heavy armor. Choose bonus feats that enhance your capabilities (such as Blind-Fight or Improved Initiative) or bolster your weaknesses (such as Iron Will).

You consider swordplay to be high art, and a martial maneuver to be the artist's signature on his masterpiece. Learning many maneuvers in one discipline generally makes you more lethal in combat than a warblade who learns a few maneuvers from each of several disciplines. This phenomenon stems from the fact that taking many maneuvers from one discipline while largely ignoring the rest lets you master higher-level maneuvers sooner. You gain only thirteen maneuvers over the course of twenty levels, so make your choices carefully.

### ADVANCEMENT

Warblades come from all walks of life. Perhaps you were a poor youth who lacked the respect of the upper class and now seeks to redress this inequity and win the praise of all through your fighting. Perhaps your drive to succeed was inborn, like the innate power of a sorcerer.

Your race matters little; anyone with the drive to win glory through combat is a good candidate for warblade training. The first warblades to embark on the path of the Iron Heart were hobgoblins. They were the first to teach Reshar, and their discipline was the first that he mastered. In the centuries that have followed, hobgoblins have not forgotten this fact, and that race still produces more warblades than many others.

Elves and half-elves often take up this class because they appreciate the warblade's view of battle as a glorious art, and the martial dwarves favor it as well. Outsiders often wonder at a warblade academy in which synchronized lines of young would-be warblades practice their weapon forms, especially when they notice that these ordered ranks include elves, hobgoblins, and dwarves. But as a warblade, you know that it is the art of the sword that makes a true warrior, not a coincidence of race.

As you become more skilled, your most important decisions are which maneuvers to learn. When selecting maneuvers, try not to choose any in isolation. Instead, pick two or three that work well in synergy so that one maneuver can set up another.

## HUMAN WARBLADE STARTING PACKAGE

**Armor:** Scale mail (+4 AC, armor check penalty –4, speed 20 ft., 30 lb.).

Heavy wooden shield (+2 AC, armor check penalty –2, 10 lb.).

**Weapons:** Longsword (1d8, crit 19–20/×2, 4 lb., one-handed slashing).

Shortbow (1d6, crit ×3, range inc. 60 ft., 2 lb., piercing).

**Skill Selection:** Pick a number of skills equal to 4 + Int modifier.

| Skill | Ranks | Ability | Armor Check Penalty |
|---|---|---|---|
| Concentration | 4 | Con | — |
| Jump | 4 | Str | –6 |
| Balance | 4 | Dex | –6 |
| Diplomacy | 4 | Cha | — |
| Intimidate | 4 | Cha | — |
| Martial Lore | 4 | Int | — |
| Climb | 4 | Str | –6 |
| Knowledge (local) | 4 | Int | — |
| Spot (cc) | 2 | Wis | — |

**Feat:** Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Bonus Feat:** Improved Initiative.

**Gear:** Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 3 torches, quiver with 20 arrows, tent, traveler's outfit, cold weather outfit.

**Gold:** 2d4 gp.

# WARBLADES IN THE WORLD

*"The clicks and scrapes echoed off the limestone blocks, warning us of danger ahead. The dwarf and I whispered, debating a retreat, but our third was a warblade and a student of the Bright Annis. He charged, slicing the umber hulk's mandibles off, then striking it seven times more before the creature's jaw had clattered to the floor."*

—Dorrom Veshthazrell, swordsage of the Murient Temple

Warblades live by muscle and steel, but their interaction with the campaign world is not limited to trading sword slashes for talon rakes. These characters are keenly aware of their social standing, and for them, glory and honor are at least as important as gold and gems. Because these precious intangibles cannot be won by strength of blade alone, warblades constantly find themselves embroiled in liaisons with generals, kings, princesses, archprelates, and others who can confer the honor of an entire society upon a victorious hero. The whispers of courtesans, the badinage of bards, and the wit of aristocrats can be as significant to a warblade's career as the giants and phase spiders of the Sunspire Mountains—and even more ferocious.

Warblades in adventuring parties must strike a balance between group and individual goals. Ideally, the party's path guarantees the warblade both the thrill of combat and the laurels of an acclaimed hero. In cases where only one or the other is possible (such as a stealth mission to extirpate a reth dekala cell operating in embarrassingly high government circles, or a crucial escort mission in which the danger comes not from flashing swords but from the wayward nature of a dauphin), the warblade must bide his time and accept the need to sacrifice one objective for another. Never for long, however, does a prince of the sword allow himself to forgo tasting the heady rush of combat and the sweet adulation of the multitudes.

## DAILY LIFE

A warblade must train constantly to maintain his puissance. Thus, much of his day is spent working through forms, jabbing at wooden effigies, and swinging weighted swords. Many warblades are affiliated with sword temples or dojos that allow them space to practice. While out adventuring, a prince of swords often spends his time at night on watch practicing his breathing exercises and stretches. The character taking the next watch is likely to wake and find his predecessor in the trees, meditating with measured breaths and supported only by a branch under each far-flung ankle.

Once he has reached a respectable level of accomplishment, a warblade might take the Leadership feat and begin teaching his own pupils at a school—either his previous academy or one he has founded. Teaching allows a warblade to prove his worth to many students on a daily basis—and the more prestigious they are, the better. Nobles' daughters and sons are highly sought-after students. A positive word from them, placed in the right ear, can earn a warblade honor, a royal audience, or even an honor guard and a ship for his next journey.

## NOTABLES

Famous warblades fall into two categories: those who recruit followers to found a sword temple or form an adventuring band, and those who operate independently. Among the warblades who have founded their own schools, the one known as the Bright Annis is famous for her merciless training techniques. Fewer than one in ten of her students manage to complete her tutelage. Many perish while sparring with their instructors or are lost in Bright Annis's ferocious quest for the heads of drow, whom she blames for the death of a lover long ago. Among the warblades who refuse to tie themselves to a particular school or demesne are Allek Thrazt, an outcast of the hobgoblin masters of the Iron Heart school. He is known to trade his former school's secrets for bright gold. The charcoal-skinned dwarf sword prince Mardilkuthor Pwarna, the scourge of the Seekers of Reshar (a group that hopes to rediscover the Nine Swords and hasten Reshar's return). Whether Mardilkuthor's motive is fear, jealousy, or an agenda he has managed to conceal even from the Sage of Snow and Shadow, the dwarf reportedly hunts down martial adepts who seek to reunite the Nine Swords.

### ORGANIZATIONS

Because of their independent and sometimes downright chaotic natures, many warblades refuse to join traditional, hierarchical organizations, though they are not averse to the greater glory of founding one. Thus, some warblade-created organizations have one or more warblades in a leadership position, while the rank and file consists of fighters, rangers, and bards, who can record the deeds of the organization's leaders.

Mardilkuthor Pwarna has built up a network of spies, assassins, and rangers across the Sunspire Mountains and the Deluge Jungle. These individuals meet in concealed safe houses, tree blinds, and mountainside caves in the peaks gathered at the skirts of the Mother Mountain, Koshtra Amnorn. Members of this organization can advance through the capture of any adepts seeking the Nine Swords, but Mardilkuthor maintains an iron grip on command.

The Bright Annis welcomes all princes of the sword to her open-air dojo in the southern fens of the Deluge Jungle. A consummate teacher, she is harsh even by warblade standards. Her students are regularly required to make forays into the dark places beneath the earth to hunt dark elves. Any warblade who slays large numbers of drow is guaranteed advancement.

Countless other warblade organizations rise and fall according to the mercurial fortunes of individual sword princes. Most of these movements are dedicated to the greater glory of their founders, although a fair number are, ostensibly at least, focused on amassing coin or arcane power. Because the warlike natures of their leaders guarantee a high casualty rate, most such organizations are always eager for new blood.

### NPC REACTIONS

Governments, churches, and spy rings love to employ warblades. Easily motivated by promises of gold, glory, and land (whichever the employers possess a surplus of at the moment), warblades can lend excellent, efficient muscle to any mission. A wise patron sends companions of other classes along with a warblade, though, to keep him on track. Many kings and high priests have been left cursing in their chambers when word reached them of their hired muscle's fickle decision to abandon the job, seize the goal for his own, or even change sides to gain greater glory.

### RACES

The stoic, taciturn, clan-oriented mindset of dwarves is anathema to the free-thinking, brash, and individualist warblade. But even so, a surprising number of dwarves (often outcasts from their clans) choose to take up this path. Conversely, warblades are often admired by the more gregarious races, including humans, halflings, and gnomes, for their life-on-the-edge, devil-may-care attitude.

### OTHER CLASSES

Fighters, paladins, and other front-line fighters welcome warblades as brothers in steel. Mages, however, are often suspicious of warblades and tend to give them a wide berth. Rogues often see warblades as useful muscle, so eager for glory and gold that they can easily be duped. In the absence of other motives, most classes and races regard warblades with a cautious and hesitant eye. The chaotic and individualist nature of warblades means that they sometimes make unreliable companions, and no one wants to be caught in the Sunspires while the party's warblade pouts in his tent, unsatisfied with his split of the last battle's loot.

## WARBLADE LORE

Characters with ranks in Gather Information or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) can research warblades and learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** A warblade is a fighter with delusions of immortality. These glory-hounds think they can live forever in a bard's song!

**DC 15:** Warblades walk the Sublime Way, and few can match their skill with weapons. A warblade can learn combat maneuvers from many different disciplines, so you can't guess the strengths or weaknesses of any warblade you face in battle. He might move with the speed of thought, tumble like a boulder through your ranks, or attack with the savagery of a beast.

**DC 20:** A warblade tends to be a chaotic creature. His downfall is his pride—he cannot abide an affront to his prestige. The promise of honor and the laurels of a city are often enough to entice a warblade to risk his life. An enterprise's possible reward—be it glory or gold—is much more important to a warblade than the potential risks, which he often disregards completely.

## WARBLADES IN THE GAME

Combat is the natural campaign entry point for warblades. With the sun glinting off their polished armor, these characters literally shine in combat. The first warblades in your campaign might be a brother and sister seeking to restore their family name by defeating the most renowned fighter in the area (one of the PCs). Their martial maneuvers have been passed down in secret for generations, and at last these two have chosen to reveal themselves in the name of redemption and recovered honor. Alternatively, if a PC is the first warblade in your campaign world, he might experience an epiphany in battle, foreshadowed by the soothsayings of a mysterious

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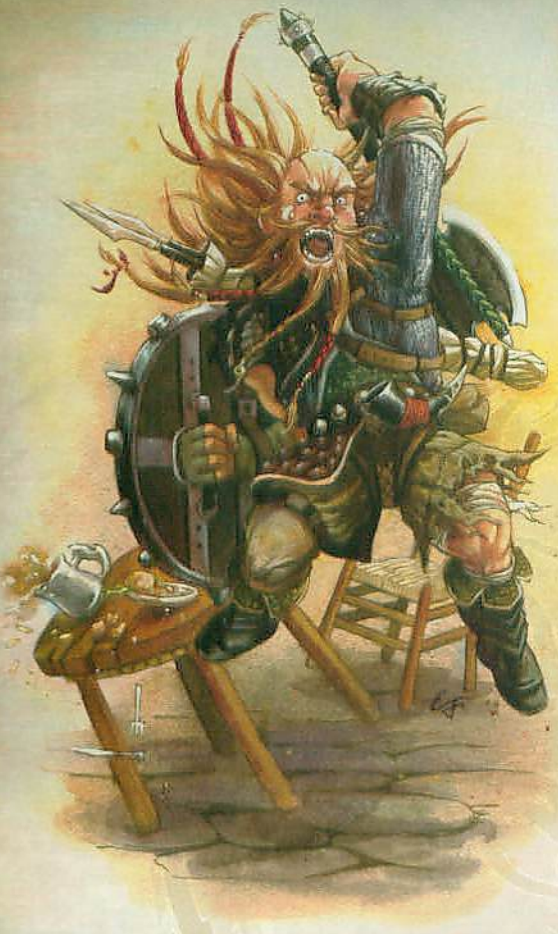

*Vardalak Axebearer, a wandering warrior*

sage, so that his first use of a martial maneuver becomes the fulfillment of a prophecy.

Once warblades have become an established part of a campaign world, they find their niches on the battlefield, in the royal court, and in the twin arenas of public opinion and public entertainment. With their crowd-pleasing martial maneuvers, warblades make excellent gladiators, and their thirst for glory often leads them to the public games. However, warblades are equally likely to become enmeshed in the webs of court intrigue, playing cardinals off dukes and infantas off dauphins in a game that they find nearly as rewarding and exciting as swordplay. Whereas a rogue might lament the loss of his riches and a cleric his loss of faith, a warblade feels no deficiency more keenly than the loss of the public's admiration.

## ADAPTATION

Campaign worlds without large, established nations or organizations can still offer warblades a chance at glory. Becoming the hero of a village can be just as meaningful as becoming the hero of a nation—especially if the warblade knows every person in the village, can inquire about the innkeeper's grandchildren by name, and is met in the temple by a congregation that rises to its feet whenever he enters. You might also consider making warblades revolutionaries fighting for freedom rather than seekers of personal glory. Their lack of magical skill plays well to the idea that warblades are oppressed fighters working to subvert a powerful arcane regime that denies the use of magic to all but its chosen agents.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Warblades stay in one place only as long as they receive constant adulation. Once their fame begins to die down, they are on the road again.

**EL 5:** The warblade Vardalak Axebearer wanders the land in search of a master who can lead him to glory. He challenges any warrior who seems skilled to a nonlethal duel. If he loses, he swears to serve the victor for a week. Unfortunately, his service is a mixed blessing. Vardalak is tough and useful in a fight, but his short temper, impetuosity, and rude nature make him a burden outside of battle. His last two masters broke camp early, leaving him snoring loudly at the side of the road.

### VARDALAK AXEBEARER — CR 5

Male dwarf warblade 5
CN Medium humanoid
**Init** +4; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1; darkvision 60 ft.
**Languages** Common, Dwarven

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**AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; +4 AC against giants, uncanny dodge
(Dex +1, armor +5, shield +2)
**hp** 53 (5 HD)
**Resist** stability
**Fort** +7 (+9 against poison), **Ref** +3, **Will** +1; +2 on saves against spells and spell-like effects

---

**Speed** 20 ft.
**Melee** +1 *dwarven waraxe* +10 (1d10+4/×3)
**Ranged** javelin +6 (1d6+3)
**Atk Options** +1 on attacks against orcs and goblinoids, battle ardor (+1 to confirm critical hits)
**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +8
**Combat Gear** 3 *potions of cure light wounds*

---

**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 5th):
*Stances*—absolute steel stance (3rd), punishing stance (1st)
*Strikes*—exorcism of steel† (3rd), rabid wolf strike† (2nd), steel wind† (1st), steely strike (1st)
*Boosts*—sudden leap (1st)
*Counters*—wall of blades† (2nd)
*Disciplines:* Iron Heart, Tiger Claw
† Readied maneuver

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**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6
**SQ** stonecunning (*PH* 15), weapon aptitude
**Feats** Diehard, Quick Draw<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe)
**Skills** Balance +8, Concentration +11, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Martial Lore +9
**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 *mithral shirt,* masterwork heavy shield, +1 *dwarven waraxe,* 2 javelins

# SKILLS AND FEATS

*Reshar travels to the islands beyond the dawn and masters the way of the Setting Sun*

The stances, strikes, counters, and other options that a martial adept learns from her various disciplines help define her, but she has access to other tools as well. This chapter focuses on skills and feats that augment, improve, and modify a martial adept's use of maneuvers. In addition, some of the feats and options presented here make it possible for characters other than martial adepts, such as clerics and fighters, to gain access to maneuvers.

## NEW SKILLS AND USES

The following new uses for two existing skills, as well as the new Martial Lore skill, showcase the abilities and talents commonly cultivated by martial adepts. In particular, the new use of Intimidate—a duel of wills—is a cornerstone of a Devoted Spirit adept's tactics.

### INTIMIDATE (CHA)

You can use this skill to participate in a duel of wills before a fight begins.

**Duel of Wills:** You can confront a potential enemy in the moments before a fight breaks out and attempt to crush his will, while he does the same to you.

Immediately before initiative is rolled for either side, you can instigate a duel of wills by selecting a single enemy you are aware of within 30 feet. Only characters with Intelligence scores of 3 or higher can engage in a duel of wills, and the participants must be able to see one another. You can't attempt to instigate more than one duel of wills per encounter.

When you instigate the duel (usually by fixing a cold, steely stare on your opponent), your adversary can respond in one of three ways.

*Submit:* The opponent takes a –2 penalty on its initiative check and a –1 penalty on attack rolls against you on the first round of combat.

*Illus. by W. England*

*Ignore the Challenge:* If your opponent ignores your challenge to engage in a contest of wills, make a DC 15 Intimidate check. If you succeed, you gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls against that opponent for 1 round.

*Participate:* Both you and your chosen foe must make an Intimidate check. The character with the higher result gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against the loser, and the loser takes a –1 penalty on attack rolls and damage rolls against the winner. If the result is a tie, neither character gains any benefit. These bonuses and penalties last for the duration of the encounter.

**Action:** None. Instigating a duel of wills requires no action and occurs before initiative is rolled.

**Try Again:** No, but you can instigate a second duel of wills with the same target after 24 hours have passed.

**Special:** If you have the Unnerving Calm feat, you can use your Concentration skill in place of your Intimidate skill when engaging in a duel of wills.

## KNOWLEDGE (LOCAL) (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

You can use the Knowledge (local) skill to answer questions about various martial practitioners and traditions. For example, you can attempt a Knowledge (local) check to identify a monastic order or swordsage school known to practice a particular martial discipline, to recall basic facts about the philosophy or teaching practices of a particular discipline, or to recall the adventures or exploits of famous martial adepts.

## MARTIAL LORE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

You can use this skill to identify martial maneuvers as soon as they are initiated.

**Check:** You can identify maneuvers and disciplines used by a combatant. The DCs for Martial Lore checks relating to various tasks are summarized below.

| DC | Task |
|---|---|
| 10 + maneuver level | Identify a maneuver being initiated by someone you can see. No action required. No retry. |
| 10 + maneuver level | Identify a maneuver recorded on a martial script. One try per day. Requires a full-round action. |
| 20 + target's initiator level | Determine all disciplines known by a particular creature by watching it initiate at least one maneuver. No action required. Retry only if the subject initiates another maneuver. |

**Action:** Varies, as noted above.

**Try Again:** See above.

**Special:** A swordsage gains a +2 bonus on a Martial Lore check involving a maneuver in a discipline in which he has discipline focus.

# NEW FEATS

Feats are the backbone of any warrior's combat prowess, and martial adepts are no exception. The following feats expand on the teachings and abilities embodied by the nine martial disciplines. Other feats in this section allow characters to gain access to martial maneuvers without gaining levels as a crusader, swordsage, or warblade.

## ADAPTIVE STYLE

With just a short period of meditation, you can change your maneuvers and tactics to meet the threat you currently face.

**Prerequisite:** Crusader, swordsage, or warblade level 1st.

**Benefit:** You can change your readied maneuvers at any time by taking a full-round action. If you're a crusader, your current granted maneuvers are lost and you gain new granted maneuvers as if you had just readied your maneuvers for the day.

**Normal:** You can change maneuvers only by spending 5 minutes to do so.

## AVENGING STRIKE

Your strength of will and strong sense of justice allow you to smite your foes.

**Prerequisite:** Any good alignment.

**Benefit:** As a swift action, you can channel the power of your faith and energy to enhance a single attack you make. You gain a bonus equal to your Charisma bonus (if any) on the attack roll and damage roll for the next melee attack you make against an outsider with the evil subtype. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma bonus (minimum 1).

## BLADE MEDITATION

You have learned a meditation that grants you insight into the martial disciplines you have studied.

**Prerequisite:** Concentration 1 rank, base attack bonus +4, one maneuver from any discipline.

**Benefit:** When you take this feat, choose a discipline. You gain a +1 bonus on damage rolls with all the preferred weapons of your chosen discipline when using a strike combat maneuver, as well as a +2 bonus on checks involving the discipline's key skill. The save DCs of any maneuvers that you perform from the chosen discipline are increased by 1, if they have a save DC.

The weapons and skills associated with each discipline are given below.

*Desert Wind:* Scimitar, light mace, light pick, spear, falchion; Tumble.

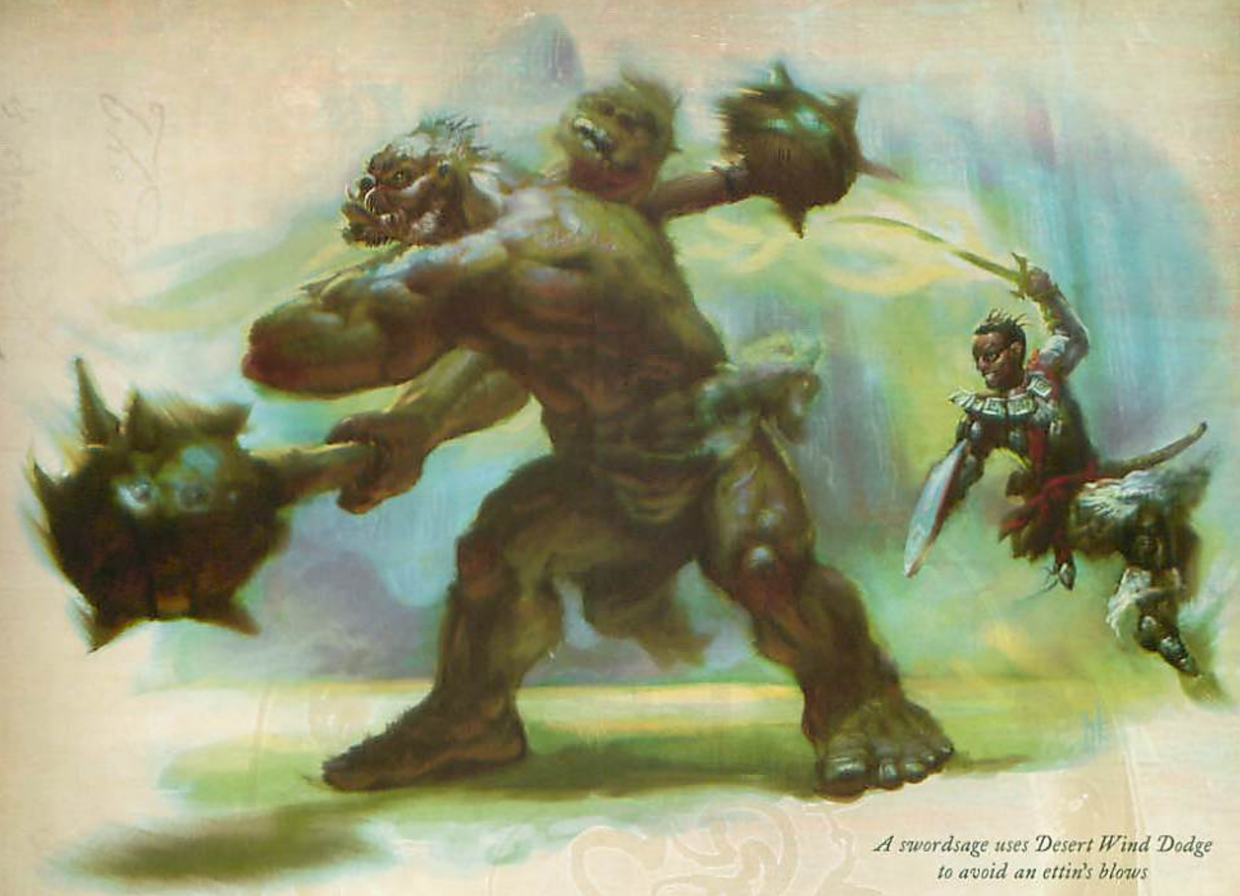
*Devoted Spirit:* Falchion, greatclub, maul*, longsword; Intimidate.

*Diamond Mind:* Rapier, shortspear, trident, bastard sword (katana); Concentration.

*Iron Heart:* Bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, longsword, two-bladed sword; Balance.

*Setting Sun:* Short sword, nunchaku, unarmed strike, quarterstaff; Sense Motive.

*Shadow Hand:* Dagger, sai, siangham, short sword, spiked chain, unarmed strike; Hide.



Illus. by T. Nordstrand

*A swordsage uses Desert Wind Dodge to avoid an ettin's blows*

*Stone Dragon:* Greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, unarmed strike; Balance.

*Tiger Claw:* Kama, kukri, handaxe, claw, greataxe, unarmed strike; Jump.

*White Raven:* Longsword, battleaxe, warhammer, greatsword, halberd; Diplomacy.

**Special:** A fighter can select Blade Meditation as a bonus feat.

*Described in the *Complete Warrior* supplement.

## DESERT FIRE

The power of the Desert Wind surges through you, and you find power in the motion of the hot winds and shifting sands that you can channel into your Desert Wind strikes.

**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind strike.

**Benefit:** If you move at least 10 feet away from your original position before using a Desert Wind strike in the same round, that strike deals an extra 1d6 points of damage.

## DESERT WIND DODGE

Your training in the Desert Wind discipline allows you to dance across the battlefield like a blistering sirocco.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 13, one Desert Wind maneuver.

**Benefit:** If you move at least 10 feet from your original position, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC and deal an extra 1 point of fire damage with any attack you make with a scimitar, light mace, light pick, spear, or falchion. This benefit lasts until the start of your next turn.

**Special:** Desert Wind Dodge can be used in place of Dodge to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other special ability. If you already have Dodge when you select Desert Wind Dodge, you can choose to lose the Dodge feat and gain a new feat in its place. You must meet the prerequisite for the new feat.

## DEVOTED BULWARK

Because of your staunch devotion to your cause and your Devoted Spirit training, you can stand your ground even in the face of an enemy's resounding attack.

**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver.

**Benefit:** If an enemy deals damage to you with a melee attack, you gain a +1 morale bonus to your AC until the end of your next turn.

## DIVINE SPIRIT [DIVINE]

The fervor and dedication of the Devoted Spirit discipline, combined with your fanatical adherence to a divine power, turns you into a font of spiritual energy. With only a moment's focus, you can channel power to enhance your fighting talents.

**Prerequisite:** Ability to turn or rebuke undead, one Devoted Spirit stance.

**Benefit:** While in a Devoted Spirit stance, you can expend a turn or rebuke undead attempt as an immediate action to heal yourself a number of hit points equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier, if any (minimum 1 point).

**Table 2–1: New Feats**

| General Feats | Prerequisites | Benefit |
|---|---|---|
| Adaptive Style | Crusader, swordsage, or warblade level 1st | Change readied maneuvers with a full-round action |
| Avenging Strike | Any good alignment | Add Cha bonus on attack and damage against an evil outsider a few times per day |
| Blade Meditation[1] | Concentration 1 rank, base attack bonus +4, one martial maneuver from any discipline | +1 damage on strikes, +2 on skill check, +1 save DC with discipline-related weapons, skills, and maneuvers |
| Desert Fire | One Desert Wind strike | +1d6 skirmish damage when using a Desert Wind strike |
| Desert Wind Dodge | Dex 13, one Desert Wind maneuver | Move 10 feet, +1 AC, +1 fire damage |
| Devoted Bulwark | One Devoted Spirit maneuver | +1 AC when foe damages you |
| Evasive Reflexes | Dex 13 | Instantly take 5-ft. step instead of an attack of opportunity |
| Extra Granted Maneuver | Crusader level 1st | Ready one more maneuver from your maneuvers known |
| Extra Readied Maneuver | Swordsage level 1st | Ready one more maneuver from your maneuvers known |
| Falling Sun Attack | Stunning Fist, one Setting Sun strike | Make Setting Sun strike a stunning attack, +1 to DC of stunning attacks and Setting Sun strikes |
| Ironheart Aura | One Iron Heart stance | Adjacent allies gain +2 bonus on saves while you are in an Iron Heart stance |
| Martial Stance[1] | One martial maneuver | Learn one martial stance |
| Martial Study[1] | — | Gain the use of a martial maneuver |
| Rapid Assault | Base attack bonus +1 | +1d6 melee damage in first round of combat |
| Shadow Blade | One Shadow Hand maneuver | Use Dex modifier instead of Str modifier on damage rolls with Shadow Sun weapons |
| Shadow Trickster | Caster level 1st, one Shadow Hand stance | +1 bonus on save DCs of illusions while in a Shadow Hand stance |
| Song of the White Raven | Bardic music (inspire courage), one White Raven maneuver | Use inspire courage as swift action while in a White Raven stance |
| Snap Kick | Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +6 | Make an extra attack, all attacks at –2 |
| Stone Power | Str 13, one Stone Dragon maneuver | Trade attack bonus for temporary hit points |
| Sudden Recovery | One martial maneuver | Recover an expended maneuver as a swift action 1/day |
| Superior Unarmed Strike | Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +3 | Deal greater unarmed damage |
| Tiger Blooded | Ability to rage, wild shape, or shift; one Tiger Claw maneuver | Knock smaller foes back while raging or wild shaped |
| Unnerving Calm | Concentration 1 rank, one Diamond Mind strike | Use Concentration in duel of wills, gain +2 bonus on attacks after successful duel for 1 round |
| Vital Recovery | Two martial maneuvers | Heal 3 + level points of damage when you recover a maneuver |
| White Raven Defense | One White Raven maneuver | +1 bonus to AC while adjacent to ally; adjacent allies gain +1 AC while you wield a White Raven weapon |

[1] A fighter can select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats.

## EVASIVE REFLEXES

When an opponent gives you an opening in combat, you know exactly what to do: slip away.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 13.

**Benefit:** When an opponent gives you a chance to make an attack of opportunity, you can instead immediately take a 5-foot step.

**Special:** Evasive Reflexes can be used in place of Combat Reflexes to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other special ability. You can take both this feat and Combat Reflexes.

## EXTRA GRANTED MANEUVER

You are especially devout or insightful, and you have more control over which of your martial maneuvers are currently granted than other crusaders.

**Prerequisite:** Crusader level 1st.

**Benefit:** You begin each encounter with one additional readied maneuver granted. This feat also applies when you determine a new set of granted maneuvers after recovering expended maneuvers. For example, if you are a 5th-level crusader, you normally begin an encounter or finish recovering expended maneuvers with two of your five readied maneuvers granted, and the remaining three maneuvers withheld. With this feat, three of your five readied maneuvers are granted, and only two are withheld. Naturally, this benefit provides you with a better array of maneuver options early in a battle.

**Special:** You can take this feat only once.

## EXTRA READIED MANEUVER

You are an unusually perspicacious student of the Sublime Way, and you find it easy to keep a large number of maneuvers ready for use.

**Prerequisite:** Swordsage level 1st.

Table 2–1: New Feats (cont.)

| Divine Feat | Prerequisites | Benefit |
|---|---|---|
| Divine Spirit | Ability to turn or rebuke undead, one Devoted Spirit stance | Instantly heal yourself while in a Devoted Spirit stance |
| **Item Creation Feat** | **Prerequisites** | **Benefit** |
| Scribe Martial Script | Crusader or swordsage level 1st | Create martial scripts |
| **Psionic Feats** | **Prerequisites** | **Benefit** |
| Instant Clarity | Concentration 7 ranks | Use swift action to gain psionic focus after initiating a successful martial strike |
| Psychic Renewal | — | Expend psionic focus and power points to recover a maneuver |
| **Tactical Feats** | **Prerequisites** | **Benefit** |
| Clarion Commander | See feat description | See feat description |
| Distant Horizon | See feat description | See feat description |
| Faith Unswerving | See feat description | See feat description |
| Gloom Razor | See feat description | See feat description |
| Perfect Clarity of Mind and Body | See feat description | See feat description |
| Reaping Talons | See feat description | See feat description |
| Scorching Sirocco | See feat description | See feat description |
| Shards of Granite | See feat description | See feat description |
| Stormguard Warrior | See feat description | See feat description |

**Benefit:** Increase the number of maneuvers you can ready for your swordsage levels by one. For example, a 5th-level swordsage can normally ready six maneuvers. With this feat, she can ready seven.

**Special:** You can take this feat only once.

## FALLING SUN ATTACK

The discipline of the Setting Sun teaches you how to turn an opponent's strengths into weaknesses. You can identify precisely the correct spot on your opponent's body to deliver a stunning attack.

**Prerequisite:** Stunning Fist, one Setting Sun strike.

**Benefit:** You can declare any Setting Sun strike delivered with an unarmed strike to be a stunning attack. In addition, add 1 to the save DC of your Stunning Fist attacks and 1 to the save DC of your Setting Sun strikes. Using this feat expends a use of your stunning attack for the day.

## INSTANT CLARITY [PSIONIC]

You have sharpened your concentration to the point that you can focus your psionic abilities with just an instant's thought.

**Prerequisite:** Concentration 7 ranks.

**Benefit:** You can take a swift action to become psionically focused after successfully initiating a martial strike. You can use this ability three times per day.

**Normal:** A character without this feat must take a full-round action to become psionically focused.

**Special:** Instant Clarity can be used in place of the Psionic Meditation feat (see *Expanded Psionics Handbook*) to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other special ability. You can take both this feat and Psionic Meditation.

## IRONHEART AURA

Your strength of spirit and martial training inspires those around you.

**Prerequisite:** One Iron Heart stance.

**Benefit:** While you are in any Iron Heart stance, adjacent allies gain a +2 morale bonus on saving throws.

## MARTIAL STANCE

You have mastered the fundamentals of a martial discipline, and you are now able to master one of its stances.

**Prerequisite:** One martial maneuver.

**Benefit:** When you gain this feat, you can select any stance from a discipline in which you already know at least one maneuver. You must meet the normal prerequisite of the stance. Your martial adept level for using this maneuver is equal to your levels in martial adept classes (if any) + 1/2 your levels in other classes.

**Special:** You can choose this feat more than once. When you take this feat again, you gain knowledge of a new stance. You do not have to choose a stance from the same discipline you selected the first time, but you must know at least one martial maneuver from the discipline of the stance you choose.

**Special:** A fighter can select Martial Stance as a bonus feat.

## MARTIAL STUDY

By studying the basics of a martial discipline, you learn to focus your *ki* and perfect the form needed to use a maneuver. As a result, you gain the use of a combat maneuver.

**Benefit:** When you gain this feat, you must choose a discipline of martial maneuvers, such as Desert Wind. The key skill for the chosen discipline becomes a class skill for all your classes (current and future).

Select any maneuver from the chosen discipline for which you meet the prerequisite. If you have martial adept levels, this maneuver becomes one of your maneuvers known. If you do not have martial adept levels, you can use this maneuver once per encounter as a martial adept with an initiator level equal to 1/2 your character level. If you do not have martial adept levels when you take this feat, and you later gain a level in a class that grants maneuvers known, these new maneuvers can be used only once per encounter and have no recovery method. If you later gain levels in a martial adept class (crusader, swordsage, or warblade), you use the recovery method for maneuvers learned as a result of those class levels, but your previous maneuvers (gained through this feat or through prestige class levels) do not gain a recovery method.

A maneuver learned through this feat cannot be exchanged for a different maneuver if you are a crusader, swordsage, or warblade (see the class descriptions in Chapter 1 for details on swapping out maneuvers as you gain levels). Once you choose a maneuver with this feat, you cannot change it.

**Special:** You can take this feat up to three times. Each time you take it after the first, you gain one of two benefits. You can choose a new discipline, gaining one of its maneuvers and its key skill as a class skill, as described above. Alternatively, you can choose a maneuver from a discipline to which you have already gained access by means of this feat. In either case, you must meet the maneuver's prerequisite.

**Special:** A fighter can select Martial Study as a bonus feat.

## PSYCHIC RENEWAL [PSIONIC]

Your mental strength and psionic abilities allow you to focus your mind on combat and use your most devastating maneuvers more frequently.

**Benefit:** As a swift action, you can recover any expended maneuver by expending your psionic focus and spending power points equal to the maneuver's level.

## RAPID ASSAULT

Your fighting style emphasizes taking foes down with quick, powerful blows.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** In the first round of combat, your melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 points of damage.

## SCRIBE MARTIAL SCRIPT [ITEM CREATION]

You know the secret of creating martial scripts—small slips of paper into which you infuse your own martial power and skill. The user of a script you have created gains the ability to use a maneuver you know.

**Prerequisite:** Crusader or swordsage level 1st.

**Benefit:** You can infuse the knowledge of any maneuver you know into a martial script (see Martial Scripts, page 147). The market price of a martial script is equal to the initiator level × maneuver level × 50 gp. You must spend 1/25 of this market price in XP and use materials costing 1/2 the market price. Scribing a martial script takes one day for each 1,000 gp of its market price.

Like a potion or scroll, a script can be used only once.

## SHADOW BLADE

In the course of your training in the Shadow Hand discipline, you learn to use your natural agility and speed to augment your attacks with certain weapons.

**Prerequisite:** One Shadow Hand stance.

**Benefit:** While you are in a Shadow Hand stance and attack with one of the discipline's preferred weapons, you can add your Dexterity modifier as a bonus on melee damage for attacks made with the weapon.

**Special:** Shadow Blade can be used in place of Weapon Finesse to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other special ability. If this substitution allows you to gain a benefit that normally applies to all finesse weapons (those described in the Weapon Finesse feat description), it instead applies only to the Shadow Hand discipline's preferred weapons.

## SHADOW TRICKSTER

Your mastery of the Shadow Hand discipline lets you augment your illusion spells with the stuff of shadow.

**Prerequisite:** Caster level 1st, one Shadow Hand strike.

**Benefit:** While you are in a Shadow Hand stance, the save DC for any illusion spell you cast increases by 2.

You also gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls when making a sneak attack, a sudden strike (see the ninja class description, page 8 of *Complete Adventurer*), or when you flank your target.

## SONG OF THE WHITE RAVEN

The White Raven discipline shows you how to rouse dedication and fervor within your allies' hearts. Such teachings can augment and improve your musical ability.

**Prerequisite:** Bardic music (inspire courage), one White Raven maneuver.

**Benefit:** While you are in any White Raven stance, you can activate your bardic music ability to inspire courage as a swift action. Your crusader and warblade levels stack with your bard levels to determine the bonus granted by your inspire courage ability.

## SNAP KICK

You have continued to hone your unarmed combat skills, and you deal more damage with your unarmed strikes.

**Prerequisite:** Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** When you make a melee attack with one or more melee weapons (including a standard attack, full attack, or even a strike maneuver), you can make an additional attack at your highest attack bonus. This attack is an unarmed attack that deals damage equal to your base unarmed attack damage + 1/2 your Str bonus. You take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls you make this round.

## STONE POWER

The principles of the Stone Dragon discipline teach you how to gather and focus your raw, physical strength into an attack.

**Prerequisite:** Str 13, one Stone Dragon maneuver.

**Benefit:** When you use an attack action or a full attack action, or you initiate a Stone Dragon strike in melee combat, you can take a penalty of as much as –5 on your attack rolls. This number cannot exceed your base attack bonus. You gain temporary hit points equal to twice the number that you subtract from your attack rolls (to a maximum of +10). These temporary hit points last until the beginning of your next turn.

**Special:** Stone Power can be used in place of Power Attack to qualify for a feat, prestige class, or other special ability. You can take both this feat and Power Attack.

## SUDDEN RECOVERY

You can instantly recover your focus, balance, and personal energy after using a martial maneuver.

**Prerequisite:** One martial maneuver.

**Benefit:** Once per day as a swift action, you can instantly recover an expended maneuver. It is now ready again. If you are a crusader, the maneuver is also granted immediately.

## SUPERIOR UNARMED STRIKE

Your unarmed strikes have become increasingly deadly, enabling you to strike your foes in their most vulnerable areas.

**Prerequisite:** Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You deal more damage with your unarmed strikes, as shown on the table below.

| Character Level | Unarmed Damage |
|---|---|
| 3rd | 1d4 |
| 4th–7th | 1d6 |
| 8th–11th | 1d8 |
| 12th–15th | 1d10 |
| 16th–20th | 2d6 |

**Special:** If you are a monk, you instead deal unarmed damage as a monk four levels higher.

*The blood of a predator runs through the veins of a Tiger Claw adept*

Illus. by K. Andrasofszky

## TIGER BLOODED

The Tiger Claw discipline teaches students to mimic the rampant, feral qualities of a wild animal. When you assume an animal form, or at least descend into a wild, bestial state, you strike with superior strength and accuracy.

**Prerequisite:** Ability to rage, shift (such as the shifter ability from the EBERRON campaign setting or the bloodclaw master prestige class feature; see page 96), or wild shape; one Tiger Claw maneuver.

**Benefit:** While you are in a rage, shifted, or wild shaped into an animal form, you can attempt to knock back 5 feet a creature of your size category or smaller that you hit with a Tiger Claw strike unless it succeeds on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier). This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

## UNNERVING CALM

You know that the secret to defeating your enemies lies within the still center of your own mind. When your enemies meet your eyes, they see only calm and certain death awaiting them.

**Prerequisite:** Concentration 1 rank, one Diamond Mind strike.

**Benefit:** You can use your Concentration skill instead of your Intimidate skill when you engage in a duel of wills (see page 27). You gain a +4 bonus on skill checks made to resolve a duel of wills. If your enemy chooses to ignore your challenge, you gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls against that opponent for 1 round.

**Normal:** Resolving a duel of wills requires an Intimidate check. You gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls against an opponent who ignores your challenge.

## VITAL RECOVERY

Preparing yourself to execute more of your maneuvers gives you the chance to catch a quick second wind and recover from damage you have sustained in the fight.

**Prerequisite:** Two martial maneuvers.

**Benefit:** When you recover one or more expended maneuvers, you heal 3 points of damage + 1 point per character level. You can gain this benefit only once per encounter.

## WHITE RAVEN DEFENSE

The White Raven discipline has taught you to shine as a gleaming beacon of hope and endurance amid the chaos of battle. Not only do you aid your allies, but you also draw strength and support from them.

**Prerequisite:** One White Raven stance.

**Benefit:** When you are in a White Raven stance and adjacent to at least one ally, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. Furthermore, when you are wielding one of the White Raven discipline's preferred weapons, each ally adjacent to you gains a +1 bonus to AC. These bonuses don't apply when you're flat-footed.

## TACTICAL FEATS

Feats with the tactical descriptor allow characters to perform a number of powerful maneuvers.

If you're playing a character who has a tactical feat, it's your responsibility to keep track of the actions you're performing as you set up the ability that the feat enables you to perform. It's also a good idea to briefly mention to the DM that you're working toward performing a tactical ability.

Some of the tactical feats refer to the first round, second round, and so on. These terms refer to the timing of the ability, not the battle as a whole. For example, you don't have to use Combat Expertise in the first round of combat to begin a tactical ability that uses that feat. The round in which you use Combat Expertise to complete an ability is considered the first round of the ability's use.

### CLARION COMMANDER

On the battlefield, you are a natural leader. You issue orders and coordinate your allies, but you also learn to take advantage of their actions and maximize the fruits of teamwork. When you attack a foe with your allies, the combined result of your efforts can be devastating.

**Prerequisite:** White Raven Defense, base attack bonus +6, two White Raven maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Clarion Commander feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Following Up:* To use this option, you must make a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check as a move action after hitting your target with a melee attack. If you hit that target again on your next turn, the target provokes an attack of opportunity from an ally of your choice (assuming at least one is in position to make such an attack).

*Perpetual Flank:* To use this option, you make a DC 20 Intimidate check against an opponent as a standard action. If this check succeeds and you make a successful melee attack against the same foe on your next turn, you and your allies can treat that enemy as flanked for 1 minute.

*Pile On:* To use this option, you must use the aid another action (*PH* 154) to grant an ally a bonus on his next attack roll against an opponent both of you threaten. If your ally attacks and hits that enemy, you can make an immediate attack of opportunity against that target. You gain this benefit if your ally hits the foe before the start of your next turn. You gain the attack of opportunity only on the first successful attack.

### DISTANT HORIZON

An initiate of the Setting Sun sometimes learns a set of combat maneuvers that combine to create the Distant Horizon fighting form. This form teaches you how to recognize an opponent's weaknesses in the current moment, as well as in the future. A blow struck now ruins an opponent's defenses against your next volley of attacks.

**Prerequisite:** Int 13, Falling Sun Attack, base attack bonus +6, two Setting Sun maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Distant Horizon feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Continued Push:* To use this option, you must move an opponent at least 5 feet with a bull rush attack or a Setting Sun strike. On your next turn, you gain a +4 bonus on any Strength, Dexterity, or grapple checks you make against that foe.

*Turn the Tables:* To use this option, a foe must charge you and either miss you with his charge attack or be unable to attempt the attack (perhaps because of your use of a maneuver). On your next turn, you can make a charge attack against that foe even if you cannot move more than 5 feet. You can also make a charge attack against that enemy even if you cannot charge in a straight line.

*Lasting Weak Spot:* To use this option, you must hit a foe that you flank with at least two melee attacks on your turn. On your next turn, as a standard action, you can make a single melee attack against your foe with a –2 penalty. If this attack hits, your foe takes an extra 1 point of damage from every melee attack that hits him for the next minute.

### FAITH UNSWERVING

The initiate of the Devoted Spirit knows that his fanaticism and devotion to a cause are enough to carry him through almost anything. This tactical feat allows you to draw on this reservoir of energy. As your foes injure you, you become a more daunting foe.

**Prerequisite:** Devoted Bulwark, base attack bonus +6, two Devoted Spirit maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Faith Unswerving feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Keep Up the Pressure:* To use this option, you must make a charge attack against a foe. If you hit, at any time before the start of your next turn you can take an immediate action to move up to your speed immediately after that foe moves, as long as you end your movement adjacent to that target.

*Take One for the Team:* To use this option, you must hit an opponent with a melee attack. At any time before the start of your next turn, you can take an immediate action to block a melee attack made by that opponent if he targets one of your allies. You must be adjacent to the ally to use this ability, and you must decide to use this ability before you know the result of the enemy's attack roll. If the attack hits your ally, roll 1d20 and add your AC to the result. If the result of this roll is greater than the opponent's attack result, he hits you instead, even if the attack roll's result wouldn't normally be high enough to hit you.

*One Last Strike:* To use this option, you must be the subject of an attack, spell, or ability that reduces you to 0 or fewer hit points. As an immediate action, you can move up to 5 feet and make a single melee attack with a +5 bonus on the attack roll. You gain a bonus on your damage roll equal to your character level. This attack is considered a strenuous action. Regardless of the result of your attack, you still take the damage from the attack that triggered this ability. You complete this immediate action before dropping to 0 or fewer hit points.

## GLOOM RAZOR

The teachings of the Shadow Hand discipline allow you to confuse your enemies. Your attacks and parries are infused with the stuff of shadow. Through careful training and discipline, you learn to use your *ki* to inhibit a foe's fighting ability with your shadowy nature.

**Prerequisite:** Hide 9 ranks, Shadow Blade, base attack bonus +6, two Shadow Hand maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Gloom Razor feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Lingering Gloom:* To use this option, your opponent must miss you due to concealment. On your next turn, you can make a Hide check opposed by your foe's Spot check as a swift action. If this check succeeds, you gain the benefit of an *invisibility* spell against that foe until the end of your turn.

*Moving Shadows:* To use this option, you must deal damage to an enemy with a melee attack and move at least 10 feet during your turn. On your next turn, you can treat that enemy as flat-footed against the first melee attack you make in that round.

*Shadow Slip:* To use this option, you must make a successful melee attack against an opponent you flank. On your next turn, you can make a DC 20 Tumble check if you are adjacent to your foe. If this check succeeds, as a free action you can move to any square adjacent to your opponent without provoking attacks of opportunity from any opponent.

## PERFECT CLARITY OF MIND AND BODY

Your mastery of the Diamond Mind discipline allows you to tap into reserves of spiritual and physical strength that other warriors cannot imagine using. Through focus, dedication, and a heightened awareness of your inner talents, you push yourself beyond your limits.

**Prerequisite:** Unnerving Calm, base attack bonus +6, two Diamond Mind maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Perfect Clarity of Mind and Body feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Coiled Spring:* To use this option, you must use the total defense action and move no more than 5 feet on your turn. On your next turn, you gain a +30-foot bonus to your land speed and a +2 bonus to AC as you burst across the battlefield. You can make a single attack after moving in this round, if you don't move more than double your modified speed.

*Expert Mind:* To use this option, you must first defeat an enemy in a duel of wills (see page 27). On your next turn, you gain a +4 morale bonus on any roll you make to disarm, feint, or trip that enemy.

*Press the Advantage:* To use this option, you must damage, disarm, or trip an opponent. On your next turn, you can make a DC 20 Intimidate check against your opponent as a free action. If this check succeeds, your foe takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 1 round.

## REAPING TALONS

When fighting with the Tiger Claw discipline's preferred weapons, you can use a variety of combat options that maximize the benefits of wielding two weapons.

**Prerequisite:** Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack bonus +6, two Tiger Claw maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Reaping Talons feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Focused Assault:* To use this option, you must fight defensively, use the total defense action, or use the Combat Expertise feat to gain a +3 bonus to AC in return for a –3 penalty on attack rolls. You must also wield any two preferred weapons of the Tiger Claw discipline and move no more than 5 feet. Keep track of each opponent that attacks you after you take that action. On your next turn, as a full-round action, you can make a single melee attack against each of the opponents that attacked you on the previous round at your highest attack bonus. You must still threaten the enemies you attack with this option.

*Cornered Predator:* To use this option, you must hit your foe with two attacks that each use one of the one-handed or light preferred weapons of the Tiger Claw discipline (kukri, kama, handaxe, unarmed strike, or claw). On your next turn, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against this foe for each opponent that threatens you.

*Talon Shield:* To use this option, you must hit the your foe with two attacks that each use one of the preferred one-handed or light weapons of the Tiger Claw discipline (kukri, kama, handaxe, unarmed strike, or claw). On your next turn, if you fight defensively or use the total defense action, you gain a +2 shield bonus to AC against that foe (in addition to the normal AC bonus granted by that action).

## SCORCHING SIROCCO

As a student of the Desert Wind, the burning fury of the desert sirocco is at your command. In battle, you call upon its power to burn your enemy and lend you speed.

**Prerequisite:** Desert Wind Dodge, base attack bonus +6, two Desert Wind maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Scorching Sirocco feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Fan the Flames:* To use this option, you must deal fire damage to a foe. On your next turn, you can attempt a DC 20 Tumble check as a move action. You must be adjacent to the target to use this ability. If you succeed, your opponent catches fire (*DMG* 303).

*Mark of Fire:* To use this option, you must deal fire damage to a foe with a Desert Wind strike. On your next turn, you must deal fire damage to that foe again and make a DC 20 Spellcraft check. If you succeed, the flames spread across your target, granting your allies a +2 bonus on attack rolls against her for 1 round.

*Dance of Flames:* To use this option, you must move at least 10 feet and initiate a Desert Wind stance. On your next turn, you gain a +2 bonus on Tumble checks. If you succeed on a Tumble check to avoid an attack of opportunity, the opponent whose attack you avoided takes 1d6 points of fire damage as mystical flames twirl around you.

Illus. by B. Trott

## SHARDS OF GRANITE

Like the great Stone Dragon, you hammer through your opponents' defenses using raw, brutal strength. Each blow sunders steel, shatters bone, and cleaves through flesh. With each successive attack you make, you hit with greater force.

**Prerequisite:** Stone Power, base attack bonus +6, two Stone Dragon maneuvers.

**Benefit:** The Shards of Granite feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Battering Smash:* To use this option, you must make a successful melee attack using one of the preferred weapons of the Stone Dragon discipline (greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, or unarmed strike) and take a –5 penalty on the attack roll using your Stone Power feat. If you hit, you ignore the target's hardness (if any).

*Eviscerating Strike:* To use this option, you must hit the same creature at least two times in the same round using one of the preferred weapons of the Stone Dragon discipline (greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, or unarmed strike). On your next turn, you ignore any penalty you take on your attack roll from your Stone Power feat when making a roll to confirm a critical hit.

*Unstoppable Onslaught:* To use this option, you must make a successful melee attack using one of the preferred weapons of the Stone Dragon discipline (greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, or unarmed strike), and take a –5 penalty on the attack roll using your Stone Power feat. If you hit, your melee attacks against that creature on your next turn overcomes its damage reduction (if any).

*Not even an iron golem can withstand the onslaught of a swordsage armed with the Shards of Granite feat*

## STORMGUARD WARRIOR

The Stormguard Warrior feat encompasses a number of the more advanced tactics and techniques you would use as a student of the Iron Heart school.

**Prerequisite:** Proficiency with an Iron Heart preferred weapon (bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, longsword, or two-bladed sword), Ironheart Aura, base attack bonus +6, two Iron Heart maneuvers.

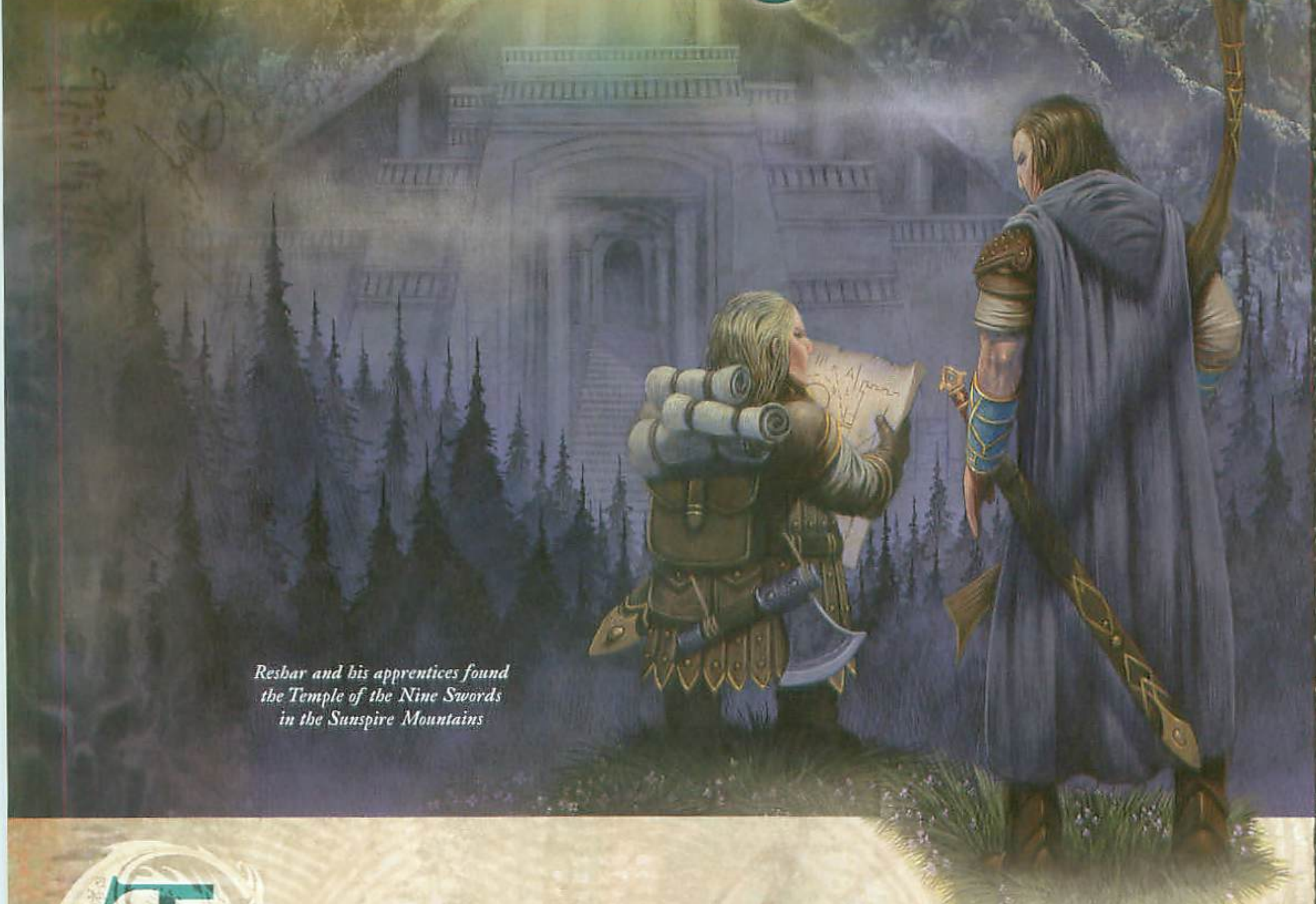
**Benefit:** The Stormguard Warrior feat enables the use of three tactical options.

*Channel the Storm:* To use this option, you must choose to refrain from making one or more available attacks of opportunity against a single opponent. On your next turn, you gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls for each attack that you refrained from making against the same opponent. You gain this bonus only against an opponent that you refrained from making an attack of opportunity against in the previous round.

*Combat Rhythm:* To use this option, you can choose to make melee touch attacks in place of normal melee attacks against an opponent. These touch attacks deal no damage. For each melee touch attack that hits, you gain a +5 bonus on melee damage rolls against that same foe on your next turn.

*Fight the Horde:* To use this option, you must deal damage to at least two different foes on your turn with melee attacks or Iron Heart strikes. On your next turn, if you fight defensively or take a –4 penalty on your attack rolls with your Combat Expertise feat (if you have it), you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against any foe you damaged with a melee attack or Iron Heart strike during the previous turn.

# BLADE MAGIC



*Reshar and his apprentices found the Temple of the Nine Swords in the Sunspire Mountains*

The uncanny power of the Sublime Way springs from a blend of physical skill, mental self-discipline, and adherence to distinct martial philosophies. Many of the maneuvers of the various martial disciplines aren't magic at all—they are simply demonstrations of near-superhuman skill and training. Although many of the maneuvers and methods taught by the Sublime Way are mundane in execution and effect, their results can sometimes rival spells. The warriors who study the nine schools are capable of battlefield feats beyond those that a traditionally schooled and trained warrior can hope to accomplish. The typical fighter might display great skill in a weapon's basic cuts, thrusts, and parries, but a student of the Sublime Way believes that mastering a weapon requires self-discipline and spiritual austerity in addition to learning the correct physical postures and movements.

This chapter covers all the basic guidelines and rules for using the maneuver system described in this book. Think of this material as analogous to that in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*. It covers the basics of the different types of stances and maneuvers—strikes, counters, and boosts—and presents information on how the maneuver system interacts with other game elements, such as spell resistance.

## MARTIAL POWERS

Martial powers fall into two broad categories: stances and maneuvers (which include boosts, counters, and strikes). A martial maneuver is a discrete extraordinary or supernatural effect that is temporarily expended after use. A stance is never expended and is always available to you.

You can use a particular stance or maneuver as many times as you like in a single day, but each time you use a maneuver, you temporarily expend it—you lose a little of your mental focus, you exhaust some small portion of your personal *ki* or energy, or you simply finish the move out of position and can't immediately launch the same attack again without assuming the proper posture and mental state first. In other words, you can't use an expended maneuver again until you rest for a brief time or perform a specific action

*Illus. by W. England*

in combat that allows you to recover one or more expended maneuvers. The type of action necessary depends on what type of martial adept you are; see Chapter 1 for details on each class's maneuver recovery mechanism. As a result, you can normally use each of your readied maneuvers once per encounter, but sometimes you can recover one or more maneuvers you used earlier in the encounter and use them again. You never expend or use up your stances, so they are always available.

## READYING MANEUVERS

You do not need to ready your stances ahead of time. Every stance you know is always available to you. However, maneuvers require preparation in the form of exercise, prayer, meditation, or simple mental rehearsal. Therefore, you must choose a selection of readied maneuvers from all the maneuvers you know. Only your readied maneuvers are available for immediate use.

The number of maneuvers you can ready at one time depends on your class and level. If you do not have any levels in a martial adept class (for example, you learned a maneuver by means of the Martial Study feat), you can ready each maneuver you know. For example, if you have chosen the Martial Study feat two times and know two martial maneuvers, you automatically ready both those maneuvers, and you can use each of those maneuvers once per encounter. You can take the Martial Study feat a maximum of three times. If you are a martial adept and you have the Martial Study feat, you do not gain any bonus to your ability to ready maneuvers—the maneuver you learned with the feat is just one more maneuver known from which you can select your readied maneuvers.

If you advance in a prestige class that grants you additional maneuvers, that class details how many additional maneuvers you can ready. These extra maneuvers readied add to your maximum number of maneuvers readied, whether you determine that number due to your class level in crusader, swordsage, or warblade, or by the number of times you have taken the Martial Study feat.

It is possible for a character to gain the Martial Study feat before entering a class that grants a progression for powers readied. In this case, use the class's number of maneuvers readied. Add any modifiers from prestige classes to the class's number of maneuvers readied.

To ready maneuvers, you require a brief period of practice, exercise, meditation, or prayer. The exact nature of the exercise or meditation depends on your martial adept class, but each class requires 5 minutes of preparation time. Since each martial maneuver requires a precise combination of techniques for gathering inner energy, training muscle memory, speaking prayers or catechisms, and even focusing the mind on specific concepts or analogies, most martial adepts can't keep every maneuver they know at the forefront of their minds. You do not need to be well rested to ready your maneuvers, but you do need to be able to stand and move without restraint. As long as you are not physically disturbed during your exercise and meditation, you can exchange your previously chosen set of readied maneuvers for a new set of readied maneuvers. Unlike a wizard preparing her spells, you cannot choose to leave a readied maneuver slot unfilled.

## INITIATING MANEUVERS AND STANCES

To initiate a maneuver or a stance, you must be able to move. You do not need to be able to speak. You initiate a maneuver by taking the specified initiation action. A maneuver might require an immediate, swift, move, standard, or full-round action to initiate. The process of initiating a maneuver is similar to that of casting a spell or manifesting a psionic power, although there are some key differences (see below). You can only choose to initiate a maneuver that is currently readied and unexpended. In addition, if you are a crusader, the maneuver you choose must be granted to you—you can't choose to initiate a maneuver that is currently withheld.

You initiate a stance as a swift action. A stance remains in effect indefinitely and is not expended. You enjoy the benefit your stance confers until you change to another stance you know as a swift action. You can remain in a stance outside of combat situations, and you can enjoy its benefit while exploring or traveling.

### KEEPING TRACK OF READIED AND EXPENDED MANEUVERS

You might find it useful to manage your currently available maneuvers by using physical objects to represent the maneuvers you have readied. A set of index cards or playing cards labeled with the names of your maneuvers works very well. As you expend your readied maneuvers, simply turn the card face-down or start a "discard pile" of expended maneuvers. When you recover an expended maneuver, return it to your "hand" of available maneuvers. You could also use tokens such as poker chips in the same way, as long as you can label them clearly.

If you're a crusader, you also need to track your granted maneuvers. Label each card with the name of a readied maneuver. Keep your cards face down. To determine which maneuvers are granted to you, all you have to do is deal yourself a card. The face-up cards in front of you represent your granted maneuvers; the face-down cards are readied maneuvers that are currently withheld. You recover your expended maneuvers when you go to draw a card and there are none left face down. At that point, shuffle all your maneuver cards together and draw new granted maneuvers for the next round.

If you know more than one stance, consider doing the same thing for your stances and keep a small hand of stances alongside your hand of maneuvers. Indicate which stance you are currently using by keeping that stance on top of the others. When you change your stance, rearrange your stack of stances accordingly.

## CONCENTRATION

Unlike with spells or psionic powers, you need not concentrate to initiate a maneuver or stance. Furthermore, if you are injured or affected by hostile spells, powers, or maneuvers while initiating a maneuver or assuming a stance, you don't lose the maneuver or stance.

Enemy interference might make certain maneuvers impossible to complete. For example, if an enemy who readied an action to trip you when you started your turn knocks you prone, you would not be able to use a maneuver that required you to charge. Similarly, if you begin your turn grappled or pinned, you might find that most of the maneuvers available to you simply won't be of any use until you get free.

If you initiate a maneuver and subsequently can't use it during your turn, the maneuver is still considered expended. You are considered to have used its initiation action for the purpose of determining what actions remain available to you on your turn.

You do not provoke attacks of opportunity when you initiate a maneuver or stance unless its description explicitly says otherwise. Some maneuvers allow you to move, charge, and take other actions that could provoke attacks of opportunity. Unless the maneuver description specifically says that such actions do not provoke attacks of opportunity, they do. For example, if you use a maneuver to charge a foe, and during that charge you move in a way that provokes attacks of opportunity, you provoke them as normal unless the maneuver description explicitly says otherwise.

## INITIATOR LEVEL

Some maneuvers and stances have variable effects (such as duration) that depend on initiator level. However, maneuvers are not impacted as strongly by a user's level as spells are. This difference in effect is primarily a balance and game play issue. Since you can use maneuvers repeatedly, they tend to scale poorly. As you attain higher levels, you usually use your low-level maneuvers less often (if you haven't already traded them out for higher-level stances, as described in the martial adept class descriptions in Chapter 1). Many stances, boosts, and counters, however, remain useful across all levels.

If you are a single-class character, your initiator level equals your level in the class that provides access to martial maneuvers (crusader, swordsage, or warblade). If you lack any martial adept levels, your initiator level is equal to 1/2 your character level.

### MULTICLASS CHARACTERS

Even when you gain levels in a class that does not grant martial maneuvers, your understanding of the martial disciplines still increases. A highly skilled fighter has the basic combat training and experience needed to master advanced maneuvers. If you are a multiclass martial adept, and you learn a new maneuver by attaining a new level in a martial adept class, determine your initiator level by adding together your level in that class + 1/2 your levels in all other classes. Look up the result on the table below to determine the highest-level maneuvers you can take. You still have to meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it.

For example, a 7th-level crusader/5th-level swordsage has an initiator level of 9th for determining the highest-level maneuvers he can take as a crusader. As a result, he can take 5th-level crusader maneuvers. As a swordsage, his initiator level is 8th, allowing him to take 4th-level swordsage maneuvers.

This process applies to all of a character's levels, whether they are in martial adept classes or other classes.

Prestige classes work a little differently. In most cases, you add the full prestige class level to your martial adept level to determine your initiator level. See the prestige class descriptions in Chapter 5 for details.

### SELECTING MARTIAL MANEUVERS

Much like spells, martial maneuvers are organized by level. Higher-level maneuvers are more powerful than lower-level ones. As you gain levels, you have the option to select higher-level maneuvers. Your level in a martial adept class determines the highest-level maneuvers you can select. For example, a 5th-level warblade can select maneuvers of 3rd level or lower.

**Table 3–1: Highest-Level Maneuvers Known**

| Initiator Level | Maneuver Level |
|---|---|
| 1st–2nd | 1st |
| 3rd–4th | 2nd |
| 5th–6th | 3rd |
| 7th–8th | 4th |
| 9th–10th | 5th |
| 11th–12th | 6th |
| 13th–4th | 7th |
| 15th–16th | 8th |
| 17th+ | 9th |

## RESOLVING A MANEUVER OR STANCE

Once you have chosen a maneuver to initiate, you must resolve its effects.

**Attack Rolls:** Many maneuvers include an attack of some kind. All offensive combat actions, even those that don't damage opponents (such as disarm and bull rush), are considered attacks. All maneuvers that opponents can resist with saving throws, that deal damage, or that otherwise harm or hamper subjects are considered attacks.

**Bonus Types:** Some maneuvers and stances grant bonuses to ability scores or Armor Class, on attacks or damage, on saves, or on a number of other variables. Each bonus has a type that indicates why or how it is granted. With the exception of dodge bonuses, two bonuses of the same type generally don't stack.

If a maneuver or stance does not identify the type of bonus conferred, its effects stack with all other effects modifying the same characteristic or attribute. Untyped bonuses always stack.

**Actions during a Maneuver:** The Initiation Action line of a maneuver description provides the action required to use that maneuver. For example, the initiation action of the radiant charge maneuver is 1 full-round action. Thus, as part of your full-round action, you bring about the effect in the maneuver description. In this case, the maneuver allows you to make a charge attack with a number of additional benefits.

## RECOVERING EXPENDED MANEUVERS

You begin each encounter with all your readied maneuvers unexpended. When you initiate a maneuver, it is expended—you cannot use it again until you recover it. You can recover expended maneuvers in two ways: through special actions or at the end of an encounter. You never expend a stance.

**Special Action:** Most martial adepts can refresh some or all of their expended maneuvers in the course of a battle by taking a special action to do so. The type of special action required depends on a martial adept's class (or feat) selection, as summarized below.

*Crusader:* A crusader recovers expended maneuvers whenever no more withheld maneuvers can be granted to him (the round in which his last withheld maneuver is granted doesn't count).

*Swordsage:* A swordsage can recover one expended maneuver of his choice as a full-round action.

*Warblade:* A warblade can recover all of his expended maneuvers as a swift action, followed by making a melee attack or using a standard action to do nothing else in the round. If he initiates a maneuver or changes his stance during a round, he can't recover his expended maneuvers.

*Multiclass Martial Adept:* A character with two or more martial adept classes keeps track of his readied maneuvers, expended maneuvers, and recovery of expended maneuvers separately for each class.

*Character with the Martial Study feat:* A character who knows one or more martial maneuvers through the Martial Study feat but does not otherwise have a level in a martial adept class cannot recover expended maneuvers through any sort of special action. He can only recover expended maneuvers at the end of an encounter (see below).

**End of the Encounter:** When an encounter ends, a martial adept automatically recovers all expended maneuvers. Even a few moments out of combat is sufficient to refresh all maneuvers expended in the previous battle. In the case of a long, drawn-out series of fights, or if an adept is out of combat entirely, assume that if a character makes no attacks of any kind, initiates no new maneuvers, and is not targeted by any enemy attacks for 1 full minute, he can recover all expended maneuvers. If a character can't avoid attacking or being attacked for 1 minute, he can't automatically recover his maneuvers and must use special actions to do so instead.

## MARTIAL POWERS AND MAGIC

In general, martial maneuvers and stances that create supernatural effects are transparent to magic or psionics. However, martial maneuvers rarely interact with spells or powers. Once a maneuver is initiated, the effect lasts only for your turn unless otherwise noted, giving an opponent little opportunity to counter it.

**Extraordinary or Supernatural Abilities:** Martial maneuvers and stances are never spells or spell-like abilities. Unless the description of the specific maneuver or stance says otherwise, treat it as an extraordinary ability. Thus, these abilities work just fine in an *antimagic field* or a dead magic zone. A maneuver or stance can't be dispelled or counterspelled, and initiating one does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

If a maneuver is overtly magical or otherwise uses a supernatural power source, it is noted as a supernatural ability in its description. In this case, the maneuver obeys all the standard rules for supernatural abilities.

**Detecting Martial Maneuvers:** Most maneuvers don't create persistent or long-lasting effects, and the results are obvious to any observer. However, identifying a specific maneuver, stance, or discipline requires the Martial Lore skill (see page 28).

**Multiple Effects:** Martial maneuvers and stances usually work as described in Chapter 4, no matter how many other powers, spells, or magical effects happen to be operating in the same area or on the same subject. Whenever a maneuver or stance has a specific effect on other maneuvers, powers, or spells, its description explains the effect. Most martial adepts can use only one stance at a time, but some high-level adepts might be able to use two stances at once.

**Stacking Effects:** Maneuvers or stances that provide bonuses or penalties on attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and other attributes do not stack with each other unless specifically noted within their descriptions.

# MANEUVER AND STANCE DESCRIPTIONS

The various martial maneuvers available to practitioners of the Sublime Way are described in Chapter 4: Maneuvers and Stances. The description of each power follows a standard format, which is explained below.

## NAME

This entry is the name by which the maneuver is generally known. However, it's fairly common for various schools or traditions of the Sublime Way to bestow their own names on maneuvers. For example, the swooping dragon strike maneuver might be known as the dragon's pounce, the gentle reminder, or something as esoteric as Liam falling down the mountain.

## MARTIAL DISCIPLINE

Each maneuver belongs to one of nine martial disciplines. The maneuvers in a discipline are loosely linked by common effects, philosophies, or functions. The second line of a maneuver or stance description provides the name of the relevant discipline, along with its type (see below).

Just like maneuver names, the names of martial disciplines vary widely from one locale to another. In fact, the term discipline is not universally used. Disciplines might be known as schools, traditions, philosophies, regimens, teachings, paths, or styles. For example, the Desert Wind discipline might be known in some areas as the Green Naga style or the Wakeful Dreamer philosophy.

Each discipline is tied to a skill that might be used in the execution of some of its maneuvers. In addition, various weapons lend themselves to the philosophy or maneuvers of different disciplines.

The nine disciplines include the following.

## DESERT WIND

Speed and mobility are the hallmarks of the Desert Wind discipline. Desert Wind maneuvers often involve blinding flurries of blows, quick charges, and agile footwork. Some maneuvers from this school, however, draw power from the supernatural essence of the desert and allow an adept practitioner to scour his foes with fire.

The key skill for Desert Wind maneuvers is Tumble. Weapons associated with Desert Wind include the scimitar, light mace, light pick, falchion, and spear.

## DEVOTED SPIRIT

Faith, piety, and purity of body and mind are the wellsprings of a warrior's true power. Devoted Spirit maneuvers harness a practitioner's spiritual strength and her zealous devotion to a cause. This discipline includes energies baneful to a creature opposed to the Devoted Spirit student's cause, abilities that can keep an adept fighting long after a more mundane warrior would fall to his enemies, and strikes infused with vengeful, fanatical power.

Intimidate is the key skill for Devoted Spirit. Devoted Spirit associated weapons include the falchion, greatclub, longsword, and maul.

## DIAMOND MIND

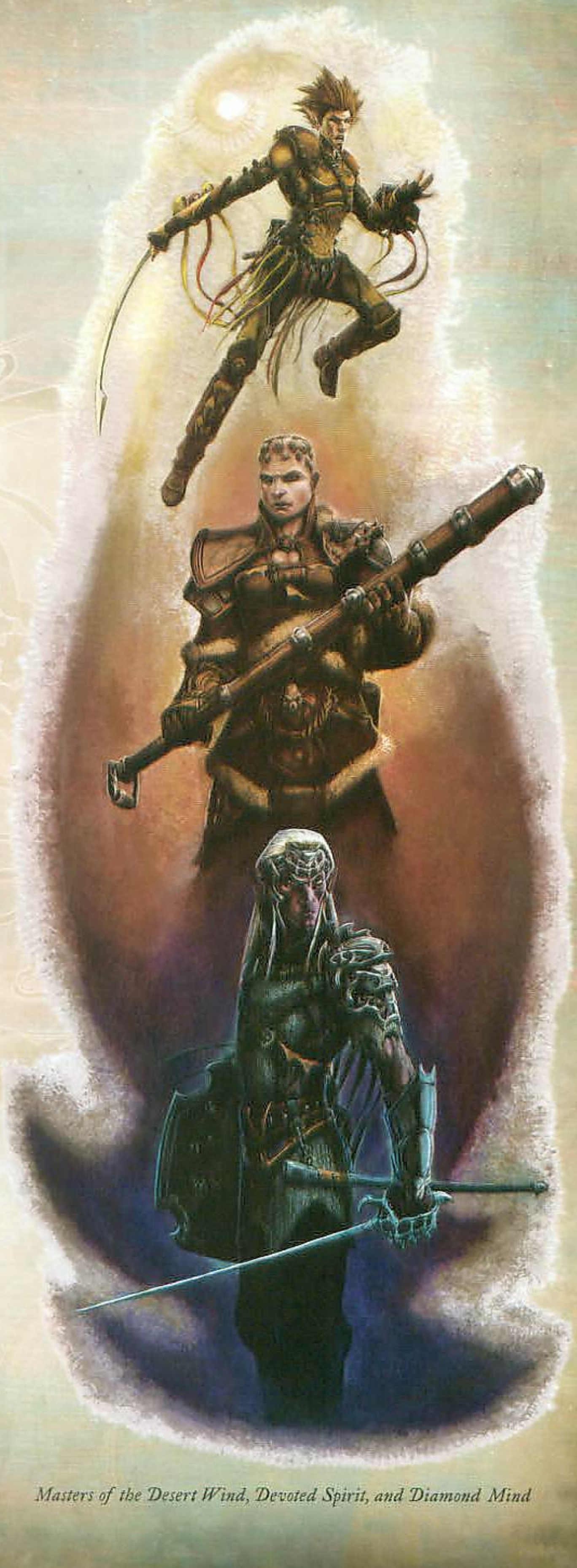
True quickness lies in the mind, not the body. A student of the Diamond Mind discipline seeks to hone his perceptions and discipline his thoughts so that he can act in slivers of time so narrow that others cannot even perceive them. A corollary of this speed of thought and action is the concept of the mind as the battleground. An enemy defeated in his mind must inevitably be defeated in the realm of the physical as well.

Concentration is the key skill for Diamond Mind. The rapier, shortspear, bastard sword (katana), and trident are the associated weapons for Diamond Mind.

## IRON HEART

Absolute mastery of the sword is the goal of the Iron Heart discipline. Through unending practice and study, the Iron Heart adept achieves superhuman skill with her weapons. Iron Heart maneuvers are demonstrations of uncanny martial skill—weaving patterns of steel that dizzy, confuse, and ultimately kill with no recourse.

The key skill for Iron Heart is Balance, since a perfect understanding of motion is essential to maneuvers in this discipline. The bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, longsword, and two-bladed sword are the associated weapons for Iron Heart.



*Masters of the Desert Wind, Devoted Spirit, and Diamond Mind*

*Illus. by M. Phillipi*

### SETTING SUN

Strength is an illusion. Adherents of the Setting Sun philosophy understand that no warrior can hope to be stronger, quicker, and more skillful than every one of her enemies. Therefore, this discipline includes maneuvers that use an adversary's power and speed against him. Setting Sun maneuvers include throws and imitative strikes. The highest forms of the Setting Sun require an adept to empty herself of preconception and impulse to become a hollow vessel unhindered by want.

Sense Motive is the key skill for the Setting Sun discipline. The associated weapons for Setting Sun are the short sword, quarterstaff, nunchaku, and unarmed strike.

### SHADOW HAND

Never show an adversary what he expects to see. The Shadow Hand discipline emphasizes deception, misdirection, and surprise. The most effective blow is one struck against an enemy who does not even know he is in danger. Because the study of deceit as a philosophy often leads into darker practices, some Shadow Hand maneuvers employ the supernatural cold and darkness of pure shadow.

The key skill for the Shadow Hand discipline is Hide. Shadow Hand associated weapons include the dagger, short sword, sai, siangham, unarmed strike, and spiked chain.

### STONE DRAGON

The strength and endurance of the mountains epitomize the Stone Dragon discipline. The methodical and relentless application of force allows a student of this philosophy to defeat any foe. Strikes of superhuman power and manifestations of perfect, idealized force make up the Stone Dragon maneuvers.

Balance is the key skill for the Stone Dragon discipline. The associated weapons for Stone Dragon are greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, and unarmed strike.

### TIGER CLAW

Consciousness is the enemy of instinct. The Tiger Claw discipline teaches that martial superiority can be achieved by discarding the veneer of civilization, along with the higher thoughts that fetter a warrior's actions. Tiger Claw maneuvers emulate the strikes, leaps, and pounces of animals. When infused with *ki* power, some Tiger Claw maneuvers also allow a martial adept to take on animalistic characteristics, speed, and bloodlust.

Tiger Claw emphasizes strength and speed, so Jump is the key skill for this discipline. The kukri, kama, claw, handaxe, greataxe, and unarmed strike are the associated weapons for Tiger Claw.

### WHITE RAVEN

No warrior fights in isolation. Cooperation, teamwork, and leadership can give two warriors the strength of five, and five warriors the strength of twenty. The student of the White Raven masters maneuvers that combine the strengths of two or more allies against a common foe. Shouts and battlecries infused with *ki* are the signature maneuvers of the White Raven discipline.

Diplomacy is the key skill for White Raven. This discipline's associated weapons are the longsword, battleaxe, warhammer, greatsword, and halberd.

## (TYPE)

Most martial powers fall into one of four categories: boost, counter, stance, or strike. Some maneuvers don't fall into any of these categories, but these are exceptions to the rule. The maneuver categories below refer to swift and immediate actions, a concept presented in earlier books such as *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and *Complete Adventurer.* If you are unfamiliar with them, see the Initiation Action section below.

**Boost:** This category covers maneuvers that allow a warrior to focus himself, summon his *ki* energy or other source of power, and unleash it through his melee attacks. A crusader who draws a deep breath, shouts an invocation to his god or cause, and then unleashes a mighty attack is using a boost.

A boost is a maneuver that grants a bonus, often on attack rolls or damage rolls, for the duration of your turn. A boost always requires a swift action, usually allowing you to initiate it before unleashing a standard action or a full attack. Some boosts impart additional effects, such as stun or fatigue, to your attacks, and others provide some additional effect on an enemy you have just successfully struck in battle. If a boost affects your attacks, it applies to all of your attacks for the round in which it was initiated, but its effect ends at the end of your turn. A boost's effect applies for its duration, no matter which weapon you might wield in that round. Even if you switch weapons in the middle of your turn, the effect of the boost applies to your new weapon as readily as the previous weapon. Each maneuver's description gives you the details of each boost's effect.

A boost doesn't have to modify a melee attack. It could provide a bonus on a skill check, to your speed, and so on, but such maneuvers are relatively rare.

**Counter:** A counter is a fast, usually defensive maneuver that you use to foil your opponent's actions. A swordsage who dodges to just beyond a rampaging minotaur's reach is using a counter.

The Setting Sun school features many counters, because it focuses on teaching students to turn an opponent's strength against him. Counters are immediate actions that you attempt during a foe's turn. Usually, your opponent must make a specific action, such as an attack against you, for you to use a counter.

**Strike:** A strike is a maneuver that allows a special attack. A warblade who delivers a single blow that slays an ogre is using a strike. A strike imparts some advantage or bonus over a standard attack, such as extra damage, an additional effect such as blinding a foe, and so forth.

Strikes almost always require a standard or full-round action to complete. Most of them involve a melee attack as part of completing the maneuver. If the attack hits, your opponent typically takes normal melee damage, as well as suffering the effect of the strike. When making a strike, you use your base attack bonus, all attack and damage modifiers, weapon damage, and so forth, as normal. You can make a critical hit with a strike, and in a few cases, a critical hit grants you additional benefits. You do not multiply extra damage from a strike with a successful critical hit. You treat it just as you would extra damage from another special ability, such as sneak attack.

Because strikes allow for a specific form of attack, you cannot benefit from spells or effects that grant you extra attacks when making a strike (such as the *haste* spell or a speed weapon). You are not taking a full attack action when you initiate a strike, even if its initiation action is 1 full-round action. In addition, you cannot combine special attacks such as sunder or bull rush with strikes, even if you have feats that make such special attacks more potent. However, some strikes enable you to make special attacks as part of their initiation; see the specific maneuver descriptions in Chapter 4 for details.

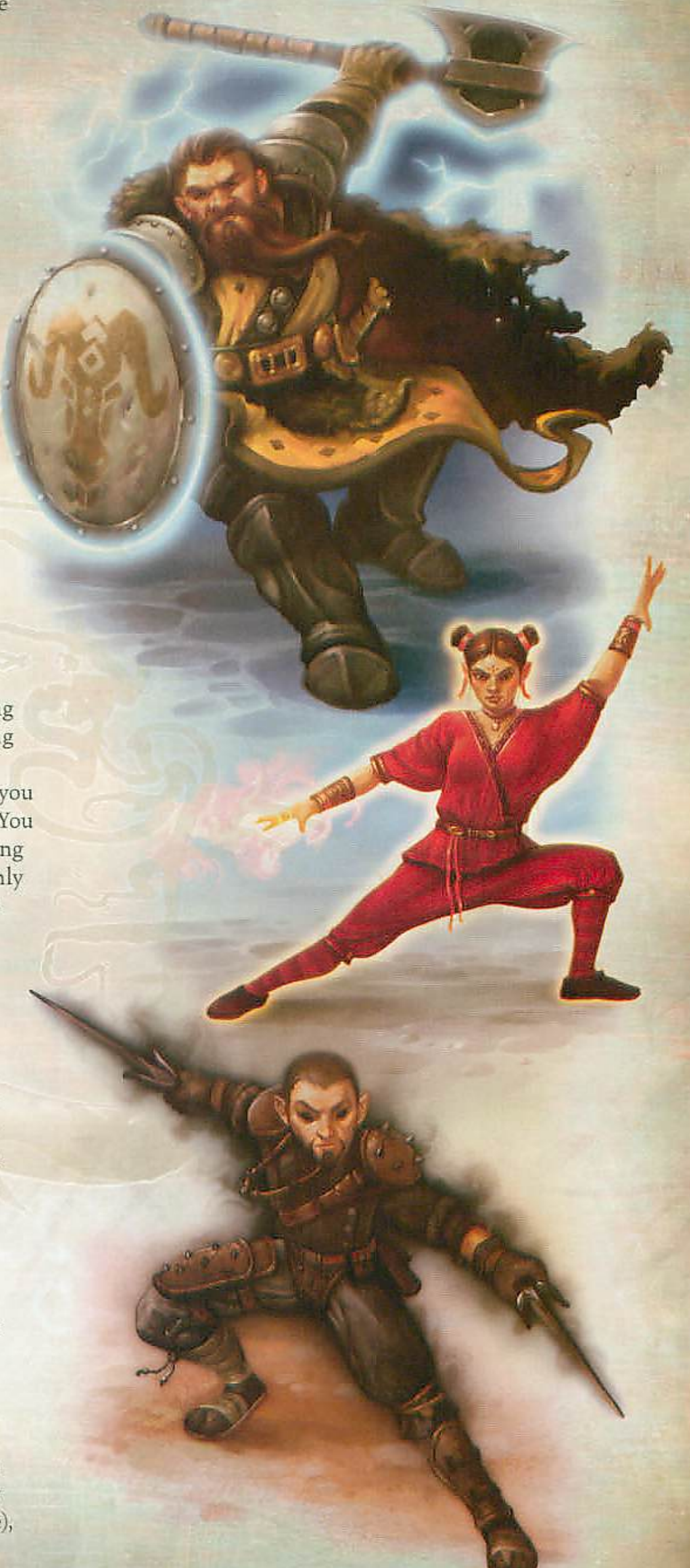
**Stance:** A stance is not a maneuver, but a specific fighting method that you maintain from round to round. So long as you maintain a stance, you gain some benefit from it. A swordsage initiate of the Shadow Hand school who creates a concealing shroud of shadow energy while he moves is using a stance.

You can initiate a stance as a swift action. When you enter a stance, you immediately gain its benefit. You continue to gain the benefit of a typical stance as long as you remain in it. Some stances give you a benefit only when you meet certain conditions. For example, a stance might grant a bonus when you move, when you remain in the same spot, or if you attack a stunned or flat-footed opponent.

You can use a single swift action to end one stance and begin another, or you can choose to simply end your current stance without entering a different one. You continue to gain a stance's benefits until you switch to a new stance or end your current one. At the start of your turn, you might be in a stance that grants you a bonus on attack rolls. You could make your attacks—gaining the stance's bonus—then use a swift action to switch to a stance that gives you a bonus to AC.

Your stance ends if you are rendered helpless for any reason. If you later recover, you must use another swift action to initiate your stance once again.

Stances are considered maneuvers for the purpose of fulfilling prerequisites for learning higher-level maneuvers, or qualifying for prestige classes or feats. For example, if a Stone Dragon maneuver requires you to know one Stone Dragon maneuver, and you know the stonefoot stance (a 1st-level Stone Dragon stance), you qualify to take the higher-level maneuver.



*Masters of the Iron Heart, Setting Sun, and Shadow Hand*

*Illus. by H. Lyon*

*Masters of the Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw, and White Raven*

*Illus. by J. Nentrup*

## [DESCRIPTOR]

Some maneuvers have descriptors that further define them. These descriptors appear on the same line as the discipline of the maneuver.

The descriptors that can apply to maneuvers are cold, electricity, evil, fear, fire, force, good, mind-affecting, teleport, and sonic. Most of these descriptors have no game effect by themselves, but they govern how a maneuver interacts with other maneuvers, powers, spells, or abilities.

## LEVEL

This entry gives the martial adept class or classes that have access to this maneuver: crusader, swordsage, or warblade. The line also gives the maneuver's level within that class.

You can learn any maneuver you like by choosing the Martial Study feat, regardless of class. However, you must still meet the prerequisite of the maneuver.

## PREREQUISITE

In addition to meeting the class and level requirements before you can learn a maneuver, you must meet a certain set of requirements to be able to choose that maneuver as one you know. Stances are considered maneuvers for the purpose of meeting a prerequisite to learn a new maneuver.

You can't learn a maneuver unless you gain a level in a martial adept class, a level in a prestige class that grants maneuvers known, or you take the Martial Study feat.

**Maneuvers Known:** Some of the more powerful maneuvers require you to learn one or more other maneuvers in the same discipline before they can be selected.

## INITIATION ACTION

This entry describes the type of action you must expend to activate a martial maneuver. In some cases, you initiate a maneuver, and its effect lasts for the rest of your turn (or beyond). In other cases, maneuvers last only as long as the action required to initiate them (1 swift action, 1 immediate action, 1 move action, 1 standard action, or 1 full-round action).

**Swift Action:** A swift action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. You can perform one swift action per turn without affecting your ability to perform other actions. In that regard, a swift action is like a free action. However, you can perform only a single swift action per turn, regardless of what other actions you take. You can take a swift action any time you would normally be allowed to take a free action.

Casting a quickened spell or manifesting a quickened power is a swift action, so you can't initiate a maneuver with an initiation action of 1 swift action in the same round that you cast a quickened spell or use a quickened power.

**Immediate Action:** Much like a swift action, an immediate action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort than a free action. However, unlike a swift action, an immediate action can be performed at any time—even if it's not your turn. Using an immediate action on your turn is the same as using a swift action, and counts as your swift action for the turn. You cannot use another immediate action or a swift action until after your next turn if you have used an immediate action when it is not currently your turn (effectively, using an immediate action before your turn is equivalent to using your swift action for the coming turn).

You cannot use an immediate action if you are currently flat-footed.

## RANGE

A maneuver's range indicates how far from you it can reach. Many maneuvers are treated as Personal-range effects, because you initiate the maneuver to give yourself a special bonus or capability for the round.

Standard ranges include (but are not limited to) the following:

**Personal:** The maneuver affects only you (but might give you an unusual power or ability that affects others for the rest of your turn).

**Touch:** You must touch a creature or object to affect it. A touch maneuver that deals damage can score a critical hit just as a weapon can, although you do not multiply the extra damage from a maneuver on a successful critical hit.

**Melee Attack:** The maneuver affects any creature you make a successful melee attack against.

**Adjacent:** The maneuver affects creatures within 1 square of you. Sometimes you only affect adjacent creatures at the beginning of your turn or at the end of your turn, but other maneuvers might affect any creature you move adjacent to during the course of your turn. See the specific maneuver descriptions for details.

**Range Expressed in Feet:** Some maneuvers have no standard range category, just a range expressed in feet.

## TARGETING A MANEUVER

You might have to make some choice about whom your maneuver is to affect or where it will originate. This entry describes the maneuver's target or targets, its effect, or its area, as appropriate.

**Target or Targets:** Most maneuvers affect a specific creature or object (or more than one creature or object) that you designate as your target or targets. You must be able to see or touch the target, and you must specifically choose that target.

Some maneuvers can be initiated only on willing targets. You can declare yourself a willing target at any time (even if you're flat-footed or it isn't your turn). Unconscious characters are always considered willing, but a character who is conscious but immobilized or helpless is not automatically willing.

Some maneuvers target you (but they might confer an unusual ability to affect other creatures for the rest of your turn). If the target of a maneuver is "You," you do not receive a saving throw—you receive the benefit of the maneuver automatically as long as you meet any other requirements for initiating it successfully.

Other maneuvers affect a creature or creatures that you successfully hit with a melee attack, and some affect a creature you successfully hit with a melee or ranged touch attack.

**Area:** Some maneuvers can affect an area. You might be able to choose the point where the maneuver's effect originates, but otherwise you usually don't control which creatures or objects an area maneuver affects.

*Burst:* A burst affects whatever it catches in its area, including creatures you can't see. It can't affect creatures that have total cover from its point of origin. The default shape for a burst is a sphere.

*Emanation:* An emanation functions like a burst, except that the effect continues to radiate from the point of origin (often you) for the duration of the maneuver.

*Spread:* A spread effect spreads out like a burst, but can turn corners. You select the point of origin, and the effect spreads out a given distance in all directions.

**Effect:** Some maneuvers create something rather than affecting things that are already present. You must designate the location where these things are to appear, either by seeing it or defining it. Range determines how far away an effect can appear.

**Line of Effect:** Maneuvers that affect a target other than you require line of effect. A line of effect is a straight, unblocked path that indicates what an effect can affect. A solid barrier cancels a line of effect, but line of effect is not blocked by fog, darkness, and other factors that limit normal sight.

You must have a clear line of effect to any target that you initiate a maneuver against, or to any space in which you wish to create an effect at range (if your maneuver allows that). A burst or emanation affects only an area, creature, or objects to which it has a line of effect from its origin.

An otherwise solid barrier with a hole of at least 1 square foot through it does not block a maneuver's line of effect.

## DURATION

A maneuver's duration tells you how long its effect lasts.

**End of Turn:** The maneuver's effect lasts until the end of your turn, then ceases to function.

**Instantaneous:** The effect of the maneuver comes and goes the instant the maneuver is initiated, though the consequences might be long-lasting. For example, the moment of alacrity boost takes only a swift action to initiate, but it improves your initiative count for the duration of the combat.

**One-Round Durations:** Some durations are measured as 1 round. You gain the capability to perform whatever special effect or attack the maneuver permits on your turn. Immediately before your action in the round after you initiated the maneuver, its effect comes to an end.

**Stance:** This duration indicates that the ability is a stance, and therefore ends only when you will it to end, when you become helpless, or when you fulfill a specific condition described in the stance's description.

**Timed Durations:** Many maneuvers last some number of rounds or minutes. When the time is up, the energy sustaining the effect fades, and the maneuver's effect ends.

**No Duration:** The effect of a maneuver without a duration lasts only as long as it takes you to initiate the maneuver. Some maneuvers "last" less than a full round. Such is often the case for maneuvers that deal extra damage on top of your normal melee damage. For example, a strike with an initiation action of 1 standard action would effectively have a duration of 1 standard action; the effect of the strike is tied to the action of making the attack. When this is the case, no duration entry is given.

## SAVING THROW

Sometimes, a maneuver with a special effect or supernatural augmentation that targets an enemy allows the creature or object to make a saving throw to avoid some or all of the effect. The saving throw line in a maneuver description defines which type of saving throw a maneuver allows.

**Negates:** The maneuver has no additional effect on a subject that makes a successful saving throw.

**Partial:** The maneuver causes an effect on its subject, such as death. A successful saving throw means that some lesser effect occurs (such as being dealt damage rather than being killed).

**Half:** The maneuver deals damage, and a successful saving throw halves the damage taken (round down).

**None:** In a case where no saving throw is allowed, the saving throw line is omitted.

**Saving Throw Difficulty Class:** The formula for determining a saving throw DC against a maneuver's special effect is provided in the maneuver's description.

## SPELL RESISTANCE

Unlike spell descriptions or power descriptions, martial maneuvers don't have a spell resistance or power resistance entry. Since maneuvers are extraordinary or supernatural abilities, not spells or spell-like abilities, spell resistance does not affect a maneuver.

## DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

This portion of the maneuver description explains what the maneuver does and how it works. It begins with a sentence or two of italicized "read-aloud" text that gives players an image of how the maneuver does what it does. If one of the previous lines in the maneuver description included "see text," this section is where you find the explanation.

# LEARNING MANEUVERS AND STANCES

Martial adepts initiate martial maneuvers and stances. These maneuvers are manifestations of supreme martial skill, focus, and clarity. They also tap into a sublime universal energy or *ki*; by performing a maneuver to perfection, a martial adept can achieve amazing feats of martial and athletic prowess.

Martial adepts do not have "spellbooks," but they do ready a selection of their maneuvers ahead of time. Unlike characters who prepare spells, martial adepts can quickly choose a new selection of readied maneuvers with a brief pause to exercise, meditate, or pray. Martial adepts do not have to ready their stances; all stances known are available at all times.

## ADDING MANEUVERS AND STANCES

Martial adepts usually learn new maneuvers and stances when they attain a new level. Not every discipline is available to every character.

**Maneuvers and Stances Gained at a New Level:** Martial adepts train, meditate, and practice between adventures and while resting. When a martial adept learns a new maneuver or stance because she gained a level, you can assume that this new knowledge represents the effects of practice and study over the course of days, weeks, or even months.

**Independent Study:** A martial adept can attempt to devise a new maneuver or stance independently, adding to an existing discipline. A DM decides if it's possible for a character to develop a new maneuver.

If a DM permits the creation of a new maneuver, observe the following guidelines.

First, the martial adept requires a safe place to meditate and practice. This effort will take a number of days equal to 3 × the maneuver's level, so if the adept is devising a 7th-level maneuver, the research will require 21 days. The adept pays 50 XP per day of study, which represents an intense regimen of meditation, fasting, and practice designed to focus the mind and spirit on the task at hand.

A martial adept can't create a new maneuver of a higher level than the adept is capable of learning.

At the end of the requisite time for study and practice, the martial adept attempts a Martial Lore check (DC 25 + (2 × the maneuver's level).

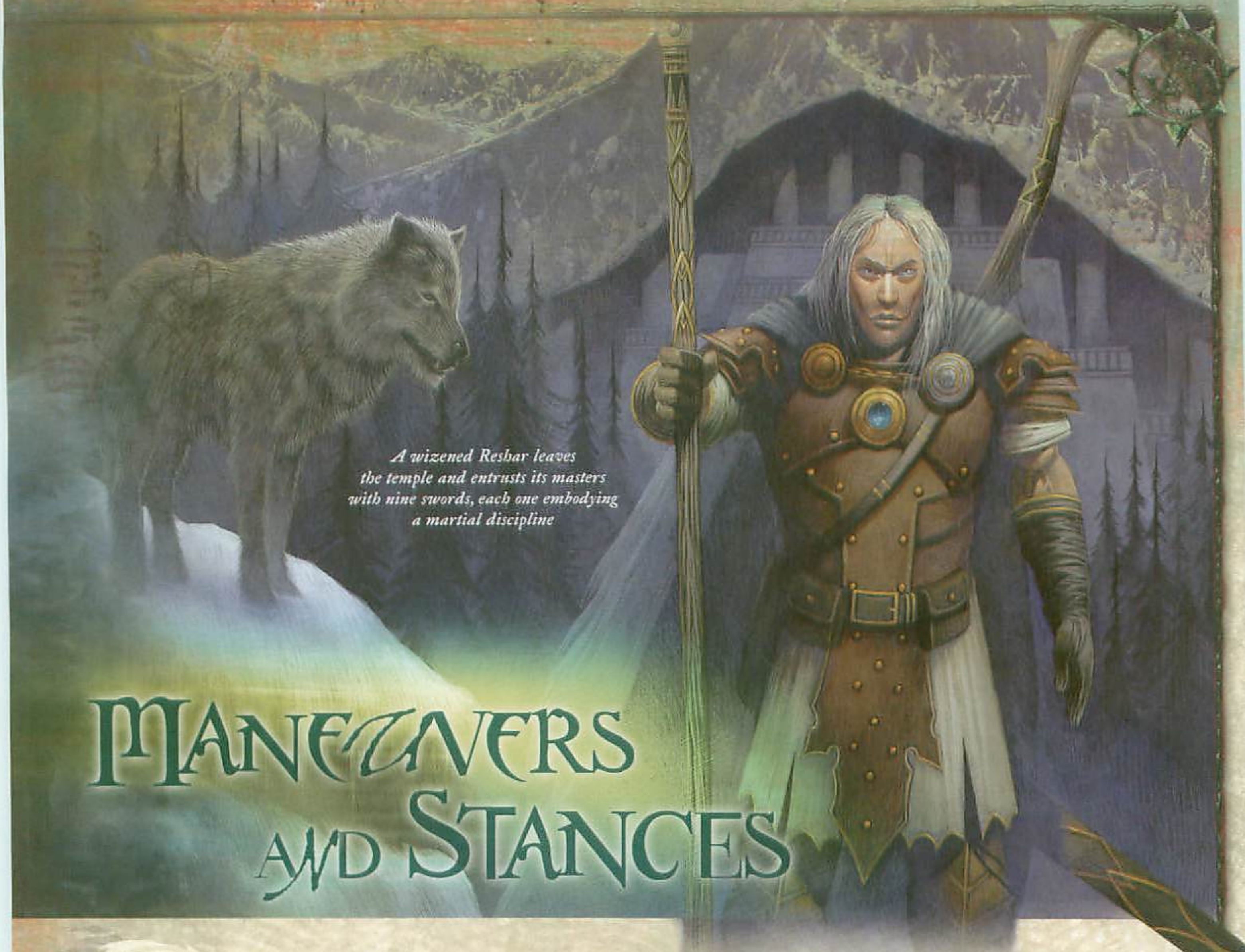
If the check succeeds, the character learns the maneuver the next time she has an opportunity to learn a new maneuver through level advancement or feat selection. If the check fails, the new maneuver is not yet perfected, and she must go through the study and practice time again if she wants to keep trying (although she regains the XP she has spent thus far).

A DM should work with the player before the attempt to develop a new maneuver begins, and give her guidance on the parameters under which a new maneuver or discipline might be acceptable (see Creating New Spells, *DMG* 35).

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

Some creatures are naturally gifted in the Sublime Way and can make use of martial maneuvers without having levels in a martial adept class. These inborn abilities function much like spell-like abilities or psi-like abilities. Characters using martial scripts (see page 147) can also make use of martial maneuvers.

Initiating a maneuver through an innate ability, or by using a magic item, works just like initiating a maneuver normally does. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity, and your maneuvers are not subject to spell resistance.



*A wizened Reshar leaves the temple and entrusts its masters with nine swords, each one embodying a martial discipline*

# MANEUVERS AND STANCES

*You know by now that the Desert Wind masters study secrets of air and fire. From the steel of their scimitars they bring forth flame to blind or kill their enemies. Yet the fire does not reside in the steel, my student; it resides in the master, and the steel is simply a conduit through which the fire is guided to the master's purpose. To call forth the flame, the Desert Wind master creates in his soul a barren and blasted place, a desert wasteland with a sun of killing strength close at hand. In his mind he recalls the focusing chants or words taught to him, hearing them in his own ears even if he does not speak them aloud; in his body he executes a precise physical movement, a quick pass of the sword in just the right arc and at just the right speed. For an instant, the link between mind, body, and spirit is perfect—and the fires of the desert sun surge forth at his command. So it is for each of the Nine Disciplines, young one. Now, where shall we begin?"*

—Harran Turiyeshor

Each of the nine disciplines of the Sublime Way is composed of a number of specific stances and maneuvers—namely, strikes, boosts, and counters. Much like a sorcerer's spells, each stance or maneuver is a specific ability that a character might know. But while a sorcerer's spells rely on arcane power that is depleted by continuous use, a martial adept's abilities are always available to him as long as he has a few minutes to prepare the maneuvers he wishes to use.

The table below provides a summary of which disciplines are available to each of the three martial adept standard classes. The lists of maneuvers and stances that begin on the next page are organized by level in ascending order, and alphabetically by discipline in each level's list. In these lists, the discipline names are truncated or reduced to one word to save space.

*Illus. by W. England*

**Table 4–1: Discipline Access by Class**

| | Crusader | Swordsage | Warblade |
|---|---|---|---|
| Desert Wind | No | Yes | No |
| Devoted Spirit | Yes | No | No |
| Diamond Mind | No | Yes | Yes |
| Iron Heart | No | No | Yes |
| Setting Sun | No | Yes | No |
| Shadow Hand | No | Yes | No |
| Stone Dragon | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tiger Claw | No | Yes | Yes |
| White Raven | Yes | No | Yes |

# MANEUVER AND STANCE LISTS

## 1ST LEVEL

Desert **Blistering Flourish:** Strike—Dazzle creatures around you.
**Burning Blade:** Boost—Deal 1d6 fire + 1/initiator level.
**Distracting Ember:** Boost—Fire elemental appears, flanks enemy.
**Flame's Blessing:** Stance—Gain fire resistance based on Tumble ranks.
**Wind Stride:** Boost—+10-ft. bonus to speed.

Devo **Crusader's Strike:** Strike—Successful attack allows you to heal 1d6 + 1/initiator level.
**Iron Guard's Glare:** Stance—Enemies take –4 penalty on attacks against your allies.
**Martial Spirit:** Stance—Heal 2 hit points with each successful attack.
**Vanguard Strike:** Strike—Allies gain +4 bonus on attacks against target.

Diam **Moment of Perfect Mind:** Counter—Use Concentration check in place of Will save.
**Sapphire Nightmare Blade:** Strike—Opponent flat-footed, +1d6 damage with Concentration check.
**Stance of Clarity:** Stance—Gain +2 AC against one foe, –2 against all others.

Iron **Punishing Stance:** Stance—Attacks deal +1d6 damage, but you have –2 to AC.
**Steel Wind:** Strike—Attack two opponents.
**Steely Strike:** Strike—+4 bonus on one attack, enemies gain +4 bonus on attacks against you.

Set **Counter Charge:** Counter—Ruin charge attack, force charging foe to move away from you.
**Mighty Throw:** Strike—Grab foe, throw him up to 10 ft.
**Step of the Wind:** Stance—Ignore difficult terrain, gain bonus against foes in such terrain.

Shadow **Child of Shadow:** Stance—You gain concealment as long as you move.
**Clinging Shadow Strike:** Strike—Foe suffers 20% miss chance on attacks.
**Island of Blades:** Stance—You and allies flank all adjacent foes.
**Shadow Blade Technique:** Strike—Roll two attacks, use lower result to deal bonus cold damage.

Stone **Charging Minotaur:** Strike—Charging bull rush deals damage, ignores attacks of opportunity.
**Stone Bones:** Strike—Gain DR 5/adamantine.
**Stonefoot Stance:** Stance—+2 bonus on Strength checks, +2 bonus to AC against larger foes.

Tiger **Blood in the Water:** Stance—Gain +1 bonus on attacks and damage for each critical hit.
**Hunter's Sense:** Stance—Gain scent.
**Sudden Leap:** Boost—Jump as a swift action.
**Wolf Fang Strike:** Strike—Attack with two weapons.

White **Bolstering Voice:** Stance—Allies gain +2 bonus on Will saves, +4 against fear.
**Douse the Flames:** Strike—Target cannot make attacks of opportunity for 1 round.
**Leading the Attack:** Strike—Allies gain +4 bonus on attacks against foe you strike.
**Leading the Charge:** Stance—Allies deal +1 damage/initiator level on charge attacks.

## 2ND LEVEL

Desert **Burning Brand:** Boost—Gain +5-ft. reach, deal fire damage.
**Fire Riposte:** Counter—Counter foe's attack with fiery touch that deals 4d6 damage.
**Flashing Sun:** Strike—Gain extra attack.
**Hatchling's Flame:** Strike—Cone deals 2d6 fire damage.

Devo **Foehammer:** Strike—Overcome foe's DR, deal +2d6 damage.
**Shield Block:** Counter—Grant shield bonus + 4 as AC bonus to ally.

Diam **Action Before Thought:** Counter—Use Concentration check in place of Reflex save.
**Emerald Razor:** Strike—Turn melee strike into touch attack.

Iron **Disarming Strike:** Strike—With successful attack, attempt to disarm foe.
**Wall of Blades:** Counter—Replace AC with attack roll result.

Set **Baffling Defense:** Counter—Use Sense Motive check to dodge attack.
**Clever Positioning:** Strike—Swap positions with target of attack.

Shadow **Cloak of Deception:** Boost—Turn invisible until the end of your turn.
**Drain Vitality:** Strike—Attack deals 2 points of Constitution damage.
**Shadow Jaunt:** Teleport 50 ft. through shadows as standard action.

Stone **Mountain Hammer:** Strike—Deal +2d6 damage, overcome DR and hardness.
**Stone Vise:** Strike—Deal +1d6 damage, attack immobilizes creature.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tiger | **Claw at the Moon:** Strike—Make Jump check, deal +2d6 damage. |
| | **Rabid Wolf Strike:** Strike—+4 bonus on attack, deal +2d6 damage, –4 AC for 1 round. |
| White | **Battle Leader's Charge:** Strike—No attacks of opportunity while charging, deal +10 damage. |
| | **Tactical Strike:** Strike—Deal +2d6 damage, adjacent allies move 5 feet. |

## 3RD LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Death Mark:** Strike—Enemy takes extra fire damage and explodes in a fiery spread. |
| | **Fan the Flames:** Strike—Ranged touch attack deals 6d6 fire damage. |
| | **Holocaust Cloak:** Stance—Attackers take 5 fire damage. |
| | **Zephyr Dance:** Counter—+4 AC against single attack. |
| Devo | **Defensive Rebuke:** Boost—Foes you strike must attack you or provoke attack of opportunity. |
| | **Revitalizing Strike:** Strike—Successful attack allows you to heal 3d6 + 1/initiator level. |
| | **Thicket of Blades:** Stance—5-ft. steps provoke attacks from you. |
| Diam | **Insightful Strike:** Strike—Use Concentration check to determine damage. |
| | **Mind Over Body:** Counter—Use Concentration check in place of Fortitude save. |
| | **Pearl of Black Doubt:** Stance—Gain +2 AC each time foe misses you. |
| Iron | **Absolute Steel Stance:** Stance—+10-ft. bonus to speed, +2 AC with movement. |
| | **Exorcism of Steel:** Strike—Strike opponent's weapon, it deals –4 damage. |
| | **Iron Heart Surge:** Remove effect, gain +2 morale bonus on attacks. |
| Set | **Devastating Throw:** Strike—Grab foe, throw him using leverage, strength. |
| | **Feigned Opening:** Counter—As an immediate action, provoke an attack, then counter. |
| | **Giant Killing Style:** Stance—+2 bonus on attacks and +4 bonus on damage against larger foes. |
| Shadow | **Assassin's Stance:** Stance—Gain sneak attack +2d6. |
| | **Dance of the Spider:** Stance—You climb walls like a spider. |
| | **Shadow Garrote:** Strike—Ranged touch attack deals 5d6 points of damage. |
| | **Strength Draining Strike:** Strike—Your attack deals 4 points of Strength damage. |
| Stone | **Bonecrusher:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage, +10 bonus on attacks to confirm critical hits. |
| | **Crushing Weight of the Mountain:** Stance—Constrict for 2d6+1-1/2 times Str when grappling. |
| | **Roots of the Mountain:** Stance—+10 bonus on checks against bull rush, trip, and others, and gain DR 2/–. |
| | **Stone Dragon's Fury:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage against objects, constructs. |
| Tiger | **Flesh Ripper:** Strike—Foe's attacks and AC have –4 penalty. |
| | **Leaping Dragon Stance:** Stance—+10 on Jump checks, always considered running for jumps. |
| | **Soaring Raptor Strike:** Strike—Attack larger foe from above with +4 bonus, deal +6d6 damage. |
| | **Wolverine Stance:** Stance—Use any weapons while grappled. |
| White | **Lion's Roar:** Boost—Defeat enemy, allies deal +5 damage. |
| | **Tactics of the Wolf:** Stance—You and allies deal +1 damage/2 initiator levels against flanked target. |
| | **White Raven Tactics:** Boost—Ally's initiative changes, he can act again. |

## 4TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Firesnake:** Strike—Stream of fire twists around corners. |
| | **Searing Blade:** Boost—Attacks deal +2d6 fire damage + 1/initiator level |
| | **Searing Charge:** Strike—Fly while charging, deal +5d6 fire damage. |
| Devo | **Divine Surge:** Strike—Deal +8d8 damage. |
| | **Entangling Blade:** Strike—Deal +2d6 damage, target has –20-ft. penalty to speed. |
| Diam | **Bounding Assault:** Strike—Double move and attack. |
| | **Mind Strike:** Strike—Attack deals 1d4 Wisdom damage. |
| | **Ruby Nightmare Blade:** Strike—Attack deals double damage with successful Concentration check. |
| Iron | **Lightning Recovery:** Counter—Reroll an attack that misses with +2 bonus. |
| | **Mithral Tornado:** Strike—Make attacks against adjacent foe, +2 on each attack. |
| Set | **Comet Throw:** Strike—Grab foe, throw him using leverage, strength. |
| | **Strike of the Broken Shield:** Strike—Attack deals +4d6 damage, makes target flat-footed. |
| Shadow | **Hand of Death:** Strike—Touch renders foe paralyzed for 1d3 rounds. |
| | **Obscuring Shadow Veil:** Strike—Deal +5d6 damage and foe has 50% miss chance on attacks for 1 round. |
| Stone | **Bonesplitting Strike:** Strike—Attack deals 2 Constitution damage. |
| | **Boulder Roll:** Boost—Gain +4 bonus on overrun attempts. |
| | **Overwhelming Mountain Strike:** Strike—Deal +2d6 damage, target loses move action. |
| Tiger | **Death From Above:** Strike—Leap into the air, attack foe from above, deal +4d6 damage. |
| | **Fountain of Blood:** Boost—Defeat foe, cause fear in enemies. |

| | |
|---|---|
| White | **Covering Strike:** Boost—Every opponent you strike cannot make attacks of opportunity for 3 rounds. |
| | **White Raven Strike:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage, target becomes flat-footed. |

## 5TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Dragon's Flame:** Strike—Cone deals 6d6 fire damage. |
| | **Leaping Flame:** Counter—Teleport adjacent to foe who attacks you. |
| | **Lingering Inferno:** Strike—Deal +2d6 fire damage, and target takes 2d6 fire damage per round for 3 rounds. |
| Devo | **Daunting Strike:** Strike—Target of attack becomes shaken. |
| | **Doom Charge:** Strike—Charge attack deals extra damage against good, you gain DR 10/—. |
| | **Law Bearer:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage, +8 attack against chaotic enemy, gain +5 on saves and AC. |
| | **Radiant Charge:** Strike—Deal +6d6 damage against evil foes, gain DR 10/—. |
| | **Tide of Chaos:** Strike—Charge attack deals extra damage against law, grants you concealment. |
| Diam | **Disrupting Blow:** Strike—Successful attack causes foe to be unable to act for 1 round. |
| | **Hearing the Air:** Stance—Gain blindsense 30 ft., +5 bonus on Listen checks. |
| | **Rapid Counter:** Counter—Strike opponent who provokes attack from you. |
| Iron | **Dancing Blade Form:** Stance—+5-ft. reach during your turn. |
| | **Dazing Strike:** Strike—Melee attack dazes opponent. |
| | **Iron Heart Focus:** Counter—Reroll save. |
| Set | **Mirrored Pursuit:** Counter—You match opponent's movement. |
| | **Shifting Defense:** Stance—5-ft. step with each missed attack against you. |
| | **Soaring Throw:** Strike—Grab foe, throw him using leverage, strength. |
| | **Stalking Shadow:** Counter—Move into foe's space as he tries to move away from you. |
| Shadow | **Bloodletting Strike:** Boost—Strike deals 4 Constitution damage. |
| | **Shadow Stride:** Teleport 50 ft. through shadows as move action. |
| | **Step of the Dancing Moth:** Stance—Ignore terrain, walk over liquid. |
| Stone | **Elder Mountain Hammer:** Strike—Deal +6d6 damage, overcome DR and hardness. |
| | **Giant's Stance:** Stance—Deal damage as if you are one size category larger. |
| | **Mountain Avalanche:** Strike—Gain ability to trample foes. |
| Tiger | **Dancing Mongoose:** Boost—Make one extra attack with each weapon (max of two extra attacks). |
| | **Pouncing Charge:** Strike—When you charge, make multiple attacks. |
| White | **Flanking Maneuver:** Strike—Hit flanked target, allies gain free attack. |
| | **Press the Advantage:** Stance—Move +5 feet with 5-ft. step, move into difficult terrain. |

## 6TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Desert Tempest:** Strike—Attack foes as you move by them. |
| | **Fiery Assault:** Stance—Melee attacks deal +1d6 fire damage. |
| | **Ring of Fire:** Strike—Surround foes with burning flame. |
| Devo | **Aura of Chaos:** Stance—Reroll and add maximum damage dice. |
| | **Aura of Perfect Order:** Stance—Treat d20 result as 11. |
| | **Aura of Triumph:** Stance—You and allies heal 4 points with each attack against evil. |
| | **Aura of Tyranny:** Stance—Drain hit points from allies. |
| | **Rallying Strike:** Strike—Successful attack allows you to heal 3d6 + 1/initiator level in 30-ft. burst. |
| Diam | **Greater Insightful Strike:** Strike—Use double Concentration check to determine damage. |
| | **Moment of Alacrity:** Boost—Gain +20 bonus on initiative during battle. |
| Iron | **Iron Heart Endurance:** Boost—Heal hit points equal to two times your level. |
| | **Manticore Parry:** Counter—Deflect attack and redirect it against opponent. |
| Set | **Ballista Throw:** Strike—Throw foe in 60-ft. line, deal 6d6 damage to all in area. |
| | **Scorpion Parry:** Counter—Parry attack into second opponent. |
| Shadow | **Ghost Blade:** Strike—Target becomes flat-footed. |
| | **Shadow Noose:** Strike—Ranged touch attack deals 8d6 damage and might stun flat-footed target. |
| | **Stalker in the Night:** Strike—Move and attack while remaining hidden. |
| Stone | **Crushing Vise:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage, attack immobilizes creature. |
| | **Iron Bones:** Strike—Gain DR 10/adamantine. |
| | **Irresistible Mountain Strike:** Strike—Deal +4d6 damage, target loses standard action. |
| Tiger | **Rabid Bear Strike:** Strike—Gain +4 on attack, deal +10d6 damage, –4 AC with attack. |
| | **Wolf Climbs the Mountain:** Strike—Enter larger foe's space, deal +5d6 damage, gain cover from foe. |
| White | **Order Forged from Chaos:** Allies move up to their speed during your turn. |
| | **War Leader's Charge:** Strike—No attacks of opportunity while charging, deal +35 damage. |

## 7TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Inferno Blade:** Boost—Melee attacks deal +3d6 fire damage + 1/initiator level.<br>**Salamander Charge:** Strike—Charge and create trail of fire. |
| Devo | **Castigating Strike:** Strike—Deal +8d6 damage and trigger area blast.<br>**Shield Counter:** Counter—Shield bash cancels foe's attack. |
| Diam | **Avalanche of Blades:** Strike—With each attack that hits, make another attack with increasing penalty.<br>**Quicksilver Motion:** Boost—Use swift action to complete move action. |
| Iron | **Finishing Move:** Strike—Gain extra damage against weakened foe.<br>**Scything Blade:** Boost—Strike one foe, free attack against another one. |
| Set | **Hydra Slaying Strike:** Strike—Foe is unable to use full attack action. |
| Shadow | **Death in the Dark:** Strike—Deal +15d6 damage to surprised target.<br>**Shadow Blink:** Teleport 50 ft. through shadows as swift action. |
| Stone | **Ancient Mountain Hammer:** Strike—Deal +12d6 damage, overcome DR and hardness.<br>**Colossus Strike:** Strike—Strike deals +6d6 damage, knocks opponent backward. |
| Tiger | **Hamstring Attack:** Strike—Attack deals 1d8 Dexterity damage, foe's speed has –10 penalty.<br>**Prey on the Weak:** Stance—Attack of opportunity with each foe that drops.<br>**Swooping Dragon Strike:** Strike—Jump over foe, deal +10d6 damage, stun. |
| White | **Clarion Call:** Boost—If you drop a foe, allies within 60 ft. can make free attack or take move action.<br>**Swarming Assault:** Strike—Allies make free attacks against a foe you strike. |

## 8TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Rising Phoenix:** Stance—Hover on column of super-heated air.<br>**Wyrm's Flame:** Strike—Cone of fire deals 10d6 fire damage. |
| Devo | **Greater Divine Surge:** Strike—Deal +6d8 damage, also gain +1 on attacks and deal +2d8 damage per point of Con damage you voluntarily take.<br>**Immortal Fortitude:** Stance—You cannot die due to hit point damage. |
| Diam | **Diamond Defense:** Counter—Gain save bonus equal to level.<br>**Diamond Nightmare Blade:** Strike—Attack deals quadruple damage with successful Concentration check.<br>**Stance of Alacrity:** Stance—Gain extra counter each round. |
| Iron | **Adamantine Hurricane:** Strike—Two attacks against each adjacent foe, +4 bonus on each attack.<br>**Lightning Throw:** Strike—Use melee attack as a line attack.<br>**Supreme Blade Parry:** Stance—Gain DR 5/—. |
| Set | **Fool's Strike:** Counter—Reflect foe's attack.<br>**Ghostly Defense:** Stance—Enemies hit target of your choice while you have concealment. |
| Shadow | **Balance on the Sky:** Stance—Walk on air.<br>**Enervating Shadow Strike:** Strike—Target of strike gains 1d4 negative levels.<br>**One With Shadow:** Counter—Become incorporeal for 1 round. |
| Stone | **Adamantine Bones:** Strike—Gain DR 20/adamantine.<br>**Earthstrike Quake:** Strike—Local quake knocks enemies prone.<br>**Strength of Stone:** Stance—Gain immunity to critical hits. |
| Tiger | **Girallon Windmill Flesh Rip:** Boost—Gain ability to rend with successful attacks.<br>**Raging Mongoose:** Boost—Make two extra attacks with each weapon carried (max four extra attacks).<br>**Wolf Pack Tactics:** Stance—Free 5-ft. step with each successful attack. |
| White | **Swarm Tactics:** Stance—Allies gain +5 on attacks against enemy adjacent to you.<br>**White Raven Hammer:** Strike—Deal +6d6 damage, stun opponent. |

## 9TH LEVEL

| | |
|---|---|
| Desert | **Inferno Blast:** Strike—Burst of fire deals 100 points of damage |
| Devo | **Strike of Righteous Vitality:** Strike—Successful attack grants *heal* spell. |
| Diam | **Time Stands Still:** Strike—Take full attack action two times. |
| Iron | **Strike of Perfect Clarity:** Strike—Deal +100 damage on single attack. |
| Set | **Tornado Throw:** Strike—Move and throw foes repeatedly. |
| Shadow | **Five-Shadow Creeping Ice Enervation Strike:** Strike—Channel shadow into target, causing hp damage, ability damage, other effects. |
| Stone | **Mountain Tombstone Strike:** Strike—Attack deals 2d6 Constitution damage. |
| Tiger | **Feral Death Blow:** Strike—Leap upon foe, slay him with a single strike. |
| White | **War Master's Charge:** Strike—You and allies charge, no attacks of opportunity, deal extra damage, stun. |

## DESERT WIND

Desert Wind maneuvers focus on quick movement and swirling, flaming strikes. The scimitar, light mace, light pick, spear, and falchion are the preferred weapons of the Desert Wind discipline. The complex spinning and slashing of the curved blade incorporated into many Desert Wind maneuvers are in fact carefully honed gestures that evoke the power of fire, if performed correctly and with the proper focus. Tumble is the key skill for Desert Wind, providing the initiator with agility and maneuverability. Desert Wind maneuvers are usable only by a swordsage, unless you take the Martial Study feat (see page 31).

### BLISTERING FLOURISH

Desert Wind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** 30-ft.-radius burst centered on you
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

*Your weapon bursts into flames as you twirl it over your head. With a flourish, you cause the fire to explode with a blinding flash.*

When you use this strike, you generate a burst of brilliant light. Any creature other than you caught in this maneuver's area must make a Fortitude save (DC 11 + your Wis modifier) or be dazzled for 1 minute.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### BURNING BLADE

Desert Wind (Boost) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*Your blade bursts into flame as it sweeps toward your foe in an elegant arc.*

A subtle yet precise twisting of your blade unlocks the power of flame. When you initiate this maneuver, fire trails from your melee weapon. For the rest of your turn, your melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 points of fire damage + 1 point per initiator level.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### BURNING BRAND

Desert Wind (Boost) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*Your weapon transforms into a roaring gout of flame. As you swing your burning blade, it stretches out beyond your normal reach to scorch your foes.*

When you initiate this maneuver, your weapon turns into a burning brand for the rest of your turn. The brand increases your reach by 5 feet, and your melee attacks made with the brand deal fire damage equal to your normal melee damage. You still gain all the normal benefits from a high Strength score, feats, and other effects that increase your melee damage. For example, an attack with a longsword that normally deals 1d8+4 points of slashing damage would instead deal 1d8+4 points of fire damage. You otherwise attack with your weapon as normal.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### DEATH MARK

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Area:** Variable spread; see text
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half; see text

*As your weapon strikes your foe, his body convulses as waves of flame run down your blade into his body. The fire causes him to briefly glow with a brilliant internal fire before the flames erupt from his body in a terrible explosion.*

When you use the strike, you channel overwhelming fiery energy into the body of your foe. In addition to dealing normal melee damage with your attack, you cause fire to erupt from your enemy's body in a spread. The radius of the spread is determined by the size of the target creature, as indicated on the table below. All creatures in the area, including your enemy, take 6d6 points of fire damage, with a Reflex save (DC 13 + your Wis modifier) for half. This radius is centered on the creature's position.

You have immunity to the fire damage from your own death mark.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

| Size | Spread Radius |
|---|---|
| Small or smaller | 5 feet |
| Medium | 10 feet |
| Large | 20 feet |
| Huge | 30 feet |
| Gargantuan | 40 feet |
| Colossal | 50 feet |

### DESERT TEMPEST

Desert Wind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You move in a blur, leaving scorch marks in your wake as you twirl around the battlefield, slicing into your foes as you move.*

As part of this maneuver, you move up to your speed. Each time you exit a square adjacent to an enemy, you can first make a single melee attack against that foe. You cannot attack a single enemy more than once with this maneuver. Your movement provokes attacks of opportunity, as normal.

### DISTRACTING EMBER

Desert Wind (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Effect:** One summoned fire elemental
**Duration:** End of turn

*A wave of heat sweeps over the area, forms a small dust funnel, and ignites into flame next to your foe.*

This boost allows you to conjure a Small fire elemental (*MM* 99) to threaten your enemy, providing you or an ally with the benefit of a flanking position. You can use this ability to place the elemental in any space within range. The elemental remains until the end of your current turn. It threatens all creatures within its reach. It takes no actions or attacks of opportunity during your turn.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## DRAGON'S FLAME

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** Cone
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*With a defiant roar, you summon your* ki *and unleash it, igniting it with a combination of your meditative focus and seething fury.*

As a master of the Desert Wind advances in his studies, he learns to stoke raging fires with his *ki*. This maneuver allows you to generate a gout of fire similar to a dragon's burning breath. With this maneuver, you blast forth a cone of fire that deals 6d6 points of fire damage to everything in the area. Creatures in the area can attempt Reflex saves (DC 15 + your Wis modifier) for half damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## FAN THE FLAMES

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Target:** One creature

*Flickering flame dances across your blade, then springs toward your target as you sweep your sword through the air.*

A skilled Desert Wind adept can gather flame within his weapon and hurl it through the air. When you initiate this maneuver, you launch a fist-sized ball of white-hot fire at a single opponent. If you make a successful ranged touch attack, your target takes 6d6 points of fire damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## FIERY ASSAULT

Desert Wind (Stance) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Fire dances along your arms and across your weapon, lending burning energy to every attack you make.*

While you are in this stance, every melee attack you make deals an extra 1d6 points of fire damage.

This stance is a supernatural ability.

## FIRE RIPOSTE

Desert Wind (Counter) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*You focus the pain from a wound you have just suffered into a fiery manifestation of revenge.*

When a creature successfully strikes you with a melee or natural weapon, you can use this maneuver to give yourself the ability to make an immediate melee touch attack. If your attack hits, your target takes 4d6 points of fire damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## FIRESNAKE

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** Special
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*You drive your weapon into the ground, causing a gout of fire to jet into the air. The fire flows back to the ground and creeps ahead like a serpent, sweeping over your enemies and roasting them where they stand.*

When you initiate this maneuver, you cause a line of fire to twist across an area to burn your enemies. This line is 60 feet long. Unlike a standard line, a firesnake can bend and twist to hit your foes. A firesnake starts in an adjacent square. It can move up to 60 feet each round. It can move out of your line of sight or line of effect, but you gain no special knowledge of the areas it moves into.

If a firesnake moves into a creature's space, that creature takes 6d6 points of fire damage, with a Reflex save (DC 14 + your Wis modifier) for half damage. A creature can only take damage from the firesnake once in a single round. It makes the saving throw and takes damage the first time that the firesnake touches it. After that, a firesnake has no effect on that creature.

A firesnake must move along the ground. It cannot fly, and it pays the standard movement penalties for difficult terrain and other effects.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## FLAME'S BLESSING

Desert Wind (Stance) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Fire is not your enemy, and it does not harm you.*

You gain some resistance to fire as long as you remain in this stance. The amount of resistance is determined by your ranks in Tumble. If you have 19 or more ranks in Tumble, you gain immunity to fire while you are in this stance.

This stance is a supernatural ability.

| Tumble Ranks | Fire Resistance |
|---|---|
| 4–8 | 5 |
| 9–13 | 10 |
| 14–18 | 20 |
| 19+ | Immunity |

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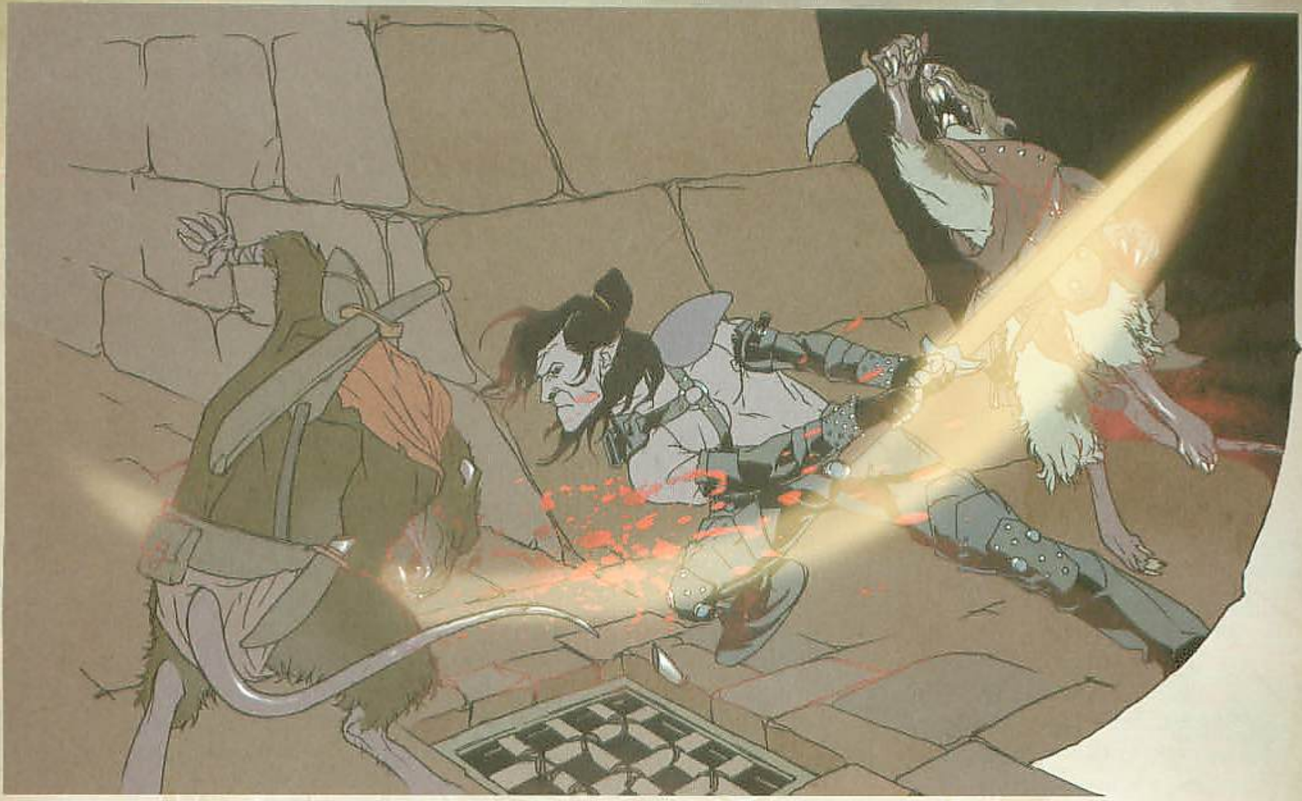

*A swordsage uses the flashing sun maneuver to strike the second wererat sneaking up behind him*

## FLASHING SUN

Desert Wind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Almost a blur of acceleration, your shining blade flashes as you attack with impossible speed.*

Flashing sun allows you to make an additional melee attack during this round. As part of this maneuver, you take a full attack action and make your normal melee attacks. However, you can make one additional attack this round at your highest attack bonus. All the attacks you make this round, including the extra attack granted by this maneuver, are made with a –2 penalty.

## HATCHLING'S FLAME

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** Cone
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*You focus a burning aura of energy at the end of your blade. It forms a seething sphere that, after a moment, bursts into a torrent of energy.*

The Desert Wind discipline teaches its students how to unleash their *ki* as burning energy. This maneuver allows you to create a wave of fire that sweeps over your enemies. When you initiate this maneuver, you blast forth a cone of flame that deals 2d6 points of fire damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## HOLOCAUST CLOAK

Desert Wind (Stance) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Fire trails from your blade as you spin it about, cloaking you in flames that leap out to burn those who attack you.*

The flame from your weapon hangs in midair, providing you with a fiery defense against your attackers. An adjacent opponent that hits you with a melee attack while you are in this stance takes 5 points of fire damage. Your holocaust cloak does not harm a creature using a reach weapon to attack you.

This stance is a supernatural ability.

## INFERNO BLADE

Desert Wind (Boost) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 7
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*A blinding light flashes from your weapon, and for a split second, it transforms into burning magma.*

You convert your *ki* into fiery energy, allowing it to flow down your arms and across your weapon. Until the end of your turn, your melee attacks deal an extra 3d6 points of fire damage + 1 point per initiator level.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### INFERNO BLAST

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 9
**Prerequisite:** Five Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** 60-ft.-radius burst centered on you
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*Hot winds swirl about you, and a faint aroma of brimstone sweeps over the area. A flickering yellow aura surrounds you and grows in intensity, shedding tremendous heat and light. Creatures around you stumble back from the heat. With a howling roar, you unleash a hellish blast of fire that melts steel and warps stone.*

Only true masters of the Desert Wind school are capable of unleashing an inferno blast. You focus your internal *ki* into a blinding hot burst of fire that deals 100 points of fire damage to all creatures in the area. You are not harmed by your own inferno blast.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### LEAPING FLAME

Desert Wind (Counter) [Teleport]
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*As your foe attacks you, you disappear in a burst of flame and smoke, only to reappear as if out of thin air next to him.*

You instantly appear in a square adjacent to a creature that attacks you with a melee or ranged attack, after resolving the enemy's attack. You cannot move into a space that is occupied by a creature or object. You can move up to 100 feet in this manner. If you cannot move adjacent to the target, this maneuver fails to function but is still considered used.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### LINGERING INFERNO

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 3 rounds; see text

*A blue, dancing flame appears on your weapon. As you strike your foe, this flame slides off your weapon and covers your enemy in raging fire.*

You make a single melee attack that deals an extra 2d6 points of fire damage. In addition, if your strike hits, the flames upon your weapon bind to the target, which takes an extra 2d6 points of fire damage each round at the start of its turn for 3 rounds.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### RING OF FIRE

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Special; see text
**Area:** Special; see text
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*You move in a blur, your feet wreathed in flaming energy. As you run, you leave a trail of fire behind you. You encircle a foe, and the ring of fire you leave behind bursts into an inferno that engulfs your enemy and everything else in the area.*

As part of this maneuver, you can move up to two times your speed along the ground. All of your movement must be along continuous, solid ground. You leave a trail of flames in your wake. These flames have no effect unless they form a closed area. In this case, a raging inferno erupts within that area. All creatures within the area take 12d6 points of fire damage, with a Reflex save (DC 16 + your Wis modifier) for half damage.

The inferno erupts the first time you form a closed area. You cannot create multiple areas in one move.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### RISING PHOENIX

Desert Wind 8 (Stance) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Hot wind swirls about your feet, lifting you skyward as flames begin to flicker below.*

A column of superheated air lifts you into the air. While you are in this stance, you can hover up to 10 feet above any solid or liquid surface. You gain a fly speed equal to your land speed, with perfect maneuverability, but you must remain within 10 feet of the ground when you fly.

If you hover in place and make a full attack, the column of air becomes superheated, dealing 3d6 points of fire damage to creatures adjacent to or within the column, including creatures adjacent to your square. You are not harmed by this effect.

You can move across shallow pits or other such variations in terrain without losing altitude, so long as your movement wouldn't take you more than 10 feet above a solid or liquid surface. If you are ever more than 10 feet above the ground (such as if the floor drops out from under you or you move over the edge of a tall cliff), the rising phoenix stance immediately ends and you fall to the ground.

This stance is a supernatural ability.

### SALAMANDER CHARGE

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Special
**Area:** One 5-ft square per 5 ft. of movement
**Duration:** Instantaneous; 5 rounds; see text (D)

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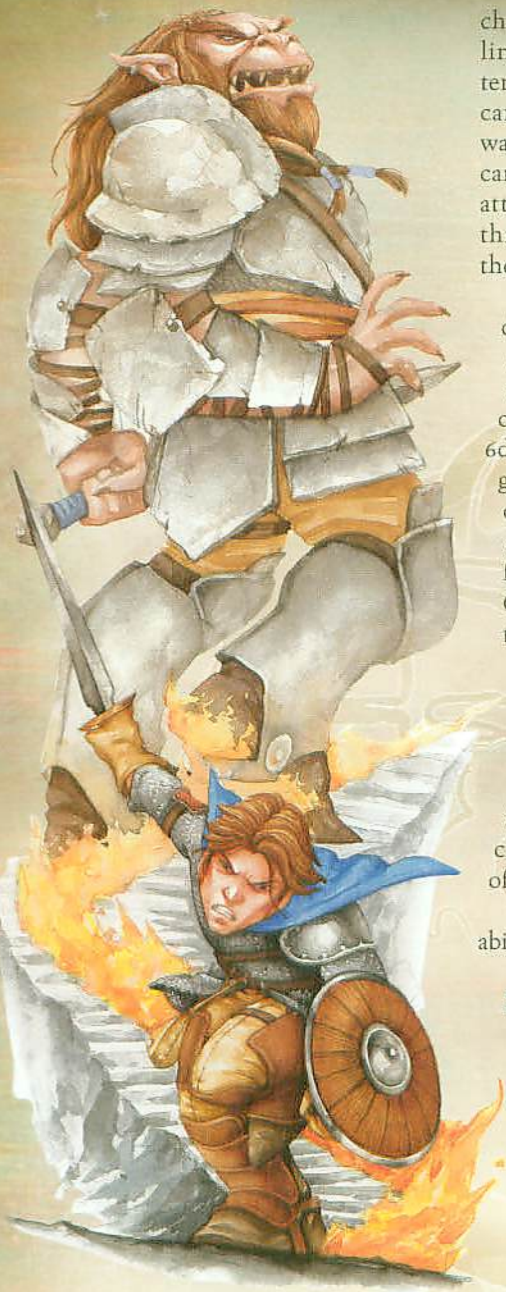


*A halfling swordsage uses the salamander charge maneuver to zigzag past an ogre bodyguard*

*You spin and tumble about the battlefield, a wall of raging flame marking your steps.*

You initiate this maneuver as part of a charge attack. As with a charge, you can move up to double your speed and make a single attack, gaining a +2 bonus on the attack roll and a –2 penalty to your Armor Class while you move and until your next turn. Unlike a normal charge, however, your salamander charge does not need to be in a straight line and is not impeded by difficult terrain, or even other creatures. You can change direction as much as you want during your movement, and you can also use your Tumble skill to avoid attacks of opportunity or to move through opponents' squares during the charge.

When you initiate a salamander charge, a wall of shimmering, spectral fire appears in each of the squares along the path you take. A creature standing in the wall takes 6d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of that creature's turn. A creature occupying a square adjacent to the wall takes 3d6 points of fire damage at the start of its turn. Creatures that move into or through the wall also take 6d6 points of fire damage. The wall lasts up to 5 rounds. You can automatically dispel the wall with a wave of your hand (a swift action), and the wall is automatically dispelled if you initiate another salamander charge. The wall does not block line of sight or line of effect.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## SEARING BLADE

Desert Wind (Boost) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*Your weapon transforms into a raging torrent of flame, causing those around you to recoil slightly from the tremendous heat.*

You convert your *ki* into fiery energy, allowing it to flow down your arms and across your weapon. Until the end of your turn, your melee attacks deal an extra 2d6 points of fire damage + 1 point per initiator level.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## SEARING CHARGE

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 full round
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*You rush through the air toward your foe, fire streaming in your wake.*

As part of this maneuver, you must charge an opponent. You gain the ability to fly at your base land speed with perfect maneuverability while charging. Resolve your charge attack normally. On a successful hit, you deal an extra 5d6 points of fire damage to the target of your charge.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## WIND STRIDE

Desert Wind (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*A warm breeze swirls about you as you move speedily away.*

The desert wind envelops you and carries you across the battlefield, giving you a burst of speed to move around and through your enemies. Until the end of your turn, you gain a +10-foot enhancement bonus to your land speed.

## WYRM'S FLAME

Desert Wind (Strike) [Fire]
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Desert Wind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** Cone
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*You spin your blade in a whirling arc. With each revolution, seething flames build upon its length. With a flourish, you bring your blade to a halt, point it at your foe, and unleash a roaring wall of flame.*

Masters of the Desert Wind can twirl and spin their blades with such power that they can evoke a great burst of fire. When you execute this maneuver, you blast forth a cone of fire that deals 10d6 points of fire damage to all in its area. Creatures in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 18 + your Wis modifier) for half damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### ZEPHYR DANCE

Desert Wind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Desert Wind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous; see text

*You spin gracefully away from a foe's attack, whirling like the desert zephyr racing across the sands. Your enemy's blade barely touches your cloak as you nimbly dodge aside.*

You gain a +4 dodge bonus to AC against a single attack. You can choose to use this maneuver after an opponent resolves his attack but before he determines damage.

## DEVOTED SPIRIT

Devoted Spirit maneuvers focus on toughness, endurance, ripostes, and abilities designed to defeat a specific alignment. Those who follow the Devoted Spirit discipline seek to support a cause by defending it, nurturing it, and destroying its enemies. The falchion, greatclub, longsword, and maul are the Devoted Spirit discipline's preferred weapons, though many who follow this school of battle embrace weapons tied to the causes they follow. Intimidate is the key skill for Devoted Spirit.

### AURA OF CHAOS

Devoted Spirit (Stance) [Chaos]
**Level:** Crusader 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*A coruscating aura of purple energy surrounds you as chaos runs rampant in the area immediately around you.*

While you are in this stance, your attacks have the potential to be utterly devastating. When rolling damage for a melee attack, you gain a special benefit from any damage die that rolls its maximum amount (such as a result of 6 on a d6). When one or more of your damage dice show a maximum possible result, reroll each such die and add its result to the original damage total. You can continue to reroll as long as a die shows its maximum possible result, adding each new number to the damage total until each die has shown less than a maximum result.

### AURA OF PERFECT ORDER

Devoted Spirit (Stance) [Law]
**Level:** Crusader 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*A perfect, hazy square of golden energy surrounds you as you enter this stance. Order reigns supreme, driving away the whims of chaos.*

This stance allows you to treat a potential d20 result as an 11. You must decide to use this ability immediately before rolling the d20. You can use this ability once per round. Using this ability does not take an action. You simply decide to invoke it before rolling a d20 for any reason, such as for an attack, save, or check.

### AURA OF TRIUMPH

Devoted Spirit (Stance) [Good]
**Level:** Crusader 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Targets:** You and one ally within 10 ft.
**Duration:** Stance

*You channel the power of good through your body and soul, infusing the area around you with a soft, golden radiance. With each blow you strike against evil, you feel invigorated and driven onward.*

While you are in this stance, you and any ally within 10 feet of you both heal 4 points of damage with each successful melee attack either of you makes against an evil target.

### AURA OF TYRANNY

Devoted Spirit (Stance) [Evil]
**Level:** Crusader 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*A sickly gray radiance surrounds you, sapping the strength of your allies and funneling it to you.*

While you are in this stance, you drain hit points from your allies. At the end of your turn, you can choose to deal 2 points of damage to each willing ally within 10 feet. For each ally who takes this damage, you heal 1 point of damage.

### CASTIGATING STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 7
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Area:** 30-ft.-radius burst; see text
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial; see text

*With a howling battle cry, your weapon crackles with energy. As you strike your foe, that energy detonates in a burst that scythes through those who stand against your cause.*

When you use this strike, make a single melee attack. If you hit your opponent and his alignment has at least one component different from yours, a blast of divine energy originates from your attack's point of impact. The target of this strike takes an extra 8d6 points of damage and must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17 + your Cha modifier) or take a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 1 minute.

All of your opponents within a 30-foot-radius burst of the target creature must also succeed on a Fortitude save. Those who fail take 5d6 points of damage and take a –2 penalty on attack rolls for 1 minute. A successful save results in half damage and negates the attack penalty.

## CRUSADER'S STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Divine energy surrounds your weapon as you strike. This power washes over you as your weapon finds its mark, mending your wounds and giving you the strength to fight on.*

As part of initiating this strike, you must make a successful melee attack against an enemy whose alignment has at least one component different from yours. This foe must pose a threat to you or your allies in some direct, immediate way. If your attack hits, you or an ally within 10 feet of you heals 1d6 points of damage + 1 point per initiator level (maximum +5).

## DAUNTING STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 5
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Will negates
**Duration:** 1 minute

*You attack your foe with an overwhelming strike, hammering through his shield and armor to cleave into his flesh. This display of raw power causes him to stumble backward, fear in his eyes.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against an opponent you threaten. If this attack hits, your foe must make a Will save with a DC equal to the damage you deal or become shaken for 1 minute.

## DEFENSIVE REBUKE

Devoted Spirit (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 3
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** 1 round

*You sweep your weapon in a wide, deadly arc. When your blows strike home, you send your foe tumbling back on the defensive. He must deal with you first, or leave himself open to your deadly counter.*

Defensive rebuke allows you to excel at controlling the battlefield around you. Your enemies must pay heed to the threat you pose. If they ignore you in favor of attacking other targets, you take advantage of their lapses with a punishing counterattack.

Each enemy you strike after you initiate this maneuver becomes vulnerable to your further attacks. If such an opponent attacks anyone other than you in melee for the duration of the maneuver, that attack provokes an attack of opportunity from you (each separate attack a target makes provokes an attack of opportunity, making this boost especially lethal if you have Combat Reflexes). Enemies you strike become aware of the consequences of the maneuver.

## DIVINE SURGE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 4
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your body shakes and spasms as unfettered divine energy courses through it. This power sparks off your weapon and courses into your foe, devastating your enemy but leaving you drained.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack that deals an extra 8d8 points of damage.

## DIVINE SURGE, GREATER

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 8
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round; see text

*A torrent of divine energy courses through you. With supreme force of will, you channel the energy into a devastating attack even as it saps your mortal form.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack that deals an extra 6d8 points of damage. In addition, before making this melee attack, you can also decide to take a number of points of Constitution damage equal to your initiator level or lower. For each point of Constitution damage you take, you gain a +1 bonus on your attack roll and deal an extra 2d8 points of damage. After using this maneuver, you are considered flat-footed until the beginning of your next turn.

## DOOM CHARGE

Devoted Spirit (Strike) [Evil]
**Class:** Crusader 5
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver, evil alignment
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*You cloak yourself in a black, terrible aura of contempt and spite.*

You must make a charge attack as part of this maneuver. If your target is good-aligned, your attack deals an extra 6d6 points of damage. In addition, if your charge attack hits and the target is good-aligned, you become wreathed in unholy energy. You gain damage reduction 10/— until the beginning of your next turn.

## ENTANGLING BLADE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 4
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** See text

*You hack into your foe's legs, forcing his movement to slow and his resolution to falter.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against an opponent. Your attack deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. In addition, if your attack hits, your target's speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn, which might prevent it from moving entirely. This penalty applies to all movement modes. A flying creature with a fly speed of 0 feet falls to the ground (and takes falling damage appropriately) if it is subject to this effect while in the air.

## FOEHAMMER

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your throw yourself behind your attack, lending your blow such great weight and force that you leave injuries that even magical defenses cannot mend.*

Your devotion to your cause gives you boundless energy that allows you to smash through supernatural defenses. When you land an attack, you hit with such force that damage reduction offers little resistance against you.

When you use this maneuver, you make a melee attack against a single foe. This attack automatically overcomes the opponent's damage reduction and deals an extra 2d6 points of damage.

## IMMORTAL FORTITUDE

Devoted Spirit (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Using the foehammer maneuver, a crusader of Moradin overcomes a rakshasa's natural defenses*

*Despite the horrific wounds you suffer, the flash of searing spells, and the crash of a foe's mighty attacks, you stand resolute on the field. So long as the potential for victory exists, you fight on.*

Death has little meaning to you in light of the cause you fight for. So long as the mission stands before you uncompleted, or a battle remains in doubt, you fight on. Stories abound of crusaders who, while in the grips of this stance, fought for days on end to hold a mountain pass against orcs, trolls, and other fiends.

So long as you remain in this stance, you cannot be killed or incapacitated by effects or attacks that reduce you to 0 or fewer hit points. If you take such damage, you can make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to your negative hit point total. If you fail this save, you die or fall unconscious (as appropriate). If this save is successful, you are still alive and conscious, with 1 hit point remaining.

This stance provides no protection against effects that slay you without dealing hit point damage, or other effects that petrify, paralyze, and so forth. You can still be slain by a coup de grace if a spell or effect renders you helpless.

After you attempt three saving throws to avoid death or unconsciousness, this stance automatically ends. You can activate it again on your turn as normal. Even the toughest crusader can endure only so much punishment.

## IRON GUARD'S GLARE

Devoted Spirit (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*With a quick snarl and a glare that would stop a charging barbarian in his tracks, you spoil an opponent's attack. Rather than strike his original target, your enemy turns his attention toward you.*

While you are in this stance, any opponent that you threaten takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls against your allies. This penalty does not apply to attacks made against you. Enemies you threaten become aware of the consequences of the stance.

## LAW BEARER

Devoted Spirit (Strike) [Law]
**Class:** Crusader 5
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver, lawful alignment

Illus. by T. Nordstrand

**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*The air around you hums with cosmic energy as the power of pure law surges through you. For a moment, you take on the aspect of a perfect being as you charge forward to smite your foes.*

You must make a charge attack as part of this maneuver. If the target is chaotic-aligned, you gain a +8 bonus on your attack (in addition to the charge bonus) and your attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. In addition, if your charge attack hits and the target is chaotic-aligned, you become wreathed in axiomatic energy. You gain a +5 bonus on saves and to AC until the beginning of your next turn.

## MARTIAL SPIRIT

Devoted Spirit (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*As you cleave through your foes, each ferocious attack you make lends vigor and strength to you and your allies.*

While you are in this stance, you or an ally within 30 feet heals 2 points of damage each time you make a successful melee attack. This healing represents the vigor, drive, and toughness you inspire in others. Your connection to the divine causes such inspiration to have a real, tangible effect on your allies' health.

Each time you hit an opponent in melee, you can choose a different recipient within range to receive this healing.

## RADIANT CHARGE

Devoted Spirit (Strike) [Good]
**Class:** Crusader 5
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver, good alignment
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*You gather the power of your faith and discipline, surrounding yourself in an aura of blinding glory.*

You must make a charge attack as part of this maneuver. If the target is evil-aligned, your attack deals an extra 6d6 points of damage. In addition, if your charge attack hits and the target is evil-aligned, you become wreathed in holy energy. You gain damage reduction 10/— until the beginning of your next turn.

## RALLYING STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your weapon blazes with divine energy as you smite your enemy. The energy discharges in a great pulse, sweeping over your allies and mending their wounds.*

As part of initiating this strike, you must make a successful melee attack against an enemy whose alignment has at least one component different from yours. This foe must pose a threat to you or your allies in some direct, immediate way. If your attack hits, you and all allies within 30 feet of you heal 3d6 points of damage + 1 point per initiator level (maximum +15).

## REVITALIZING STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 3
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*As you rear back to strike your foe, an aura of divine energy surrounds you. As your attack slams home, this aura dissipates in a flash, knitting your wounds as it discharges.*

As part of initiating this strike, you must make a successful melee attack against an enemy creature whose alignment has at least one component different from yours. This foe must pose a threat to you or your allies in some direct, immediate way. If your attack hits, you or an ally within 10 feet of you heals 3d6 points of damage + 1 point per initiator level (maximum +10).

## SHIELD BLOCK

Devoted Spirit (Counter)
**Level:** Crusader 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*With a heroic burst of effort, you thrust your shield between your defenseless ally and your enemy.*

As an immediate action, you can grant an AC bonus to an adjacent ally equal to your shield's AC bonus + 4. You apply this bonus in response to a single melee or ranged attack that targets your ally. You can initiate this maneuver after an opponent makes his attack roll, but you must do so before you know whether the attack was a success or a failure.

## SHIELD COUNTER

Devoted Spirit (Counter)
**Level:** Crusader 7
**Prerequisite:** Two Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*As your opponent prepares to make his attack, you bash him with your shield and disrupt his attempt.*

As an immediate action, you can attempt a shield bash against an opponent you threaten. This attack is made with a –2 penalty. If your shield attack hits, your target's next attack automatically misses.

You can use this maneuver immediately after an opponent declares an attack, but you must do so before the attack's result has been determined.

## STRIKE OF RIGHTEOUS VITALITY

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 9

*A crusader of Kord relies on her thicket of blades stance to guard against a pack of shadow demons*

Illus. by S. Ellis

**Prerequisite:** Three Devoted Spirit maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*As your enemy reels from your mighty blow, an ally nearby is simultaneously healed and cleansed of its wounds by the power of your faith.*

When you make this strike, you or one ally within 10 feet of you gains the benefit of a *heal* spell cast as a cleric of your character level. To gain the benefit of this maneuver, you must strike an enemy creature whose alignment has at least one component different from yours. This foe must pose a threat to you or your allies in some direct, immediate way.

## THICKET OF BLADES

Devoted Spirit (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 3
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You maintain a careful guard as you search for any gaps in your opponent's awareness. Even the slightest move provokes a stinging counter from you.*

While you are in this stance, any opponent you threaten that takes any sort of movement, including a 5-foot step, provokes an attack of opportunity from you. Your foes provoke this attack before leaving the area you threaten. Your opponents also cannot use the withdraw action (*PH* 143) to treat the square they start in as no longer threatened by you.

## TIDE OF CHAOS

Devoted Spirit (Strike) [Chaos]
**Class:** Crusader 5
**Prerequisite:** One Devoted Spirit maneuver, chaotic alignment
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*The power of chaos swirls around you, lending strength to your attacks as you cast your fate to the whims of luck.*

You must make a charge attack as part of this maneuver. If the target is lawful-aligned, you gain a +8 bonus on your attack (in addition to the charge bonus) and your attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. In addition, if your charge attack hits and the target is lawful-aligned, you become wreathed in anarchic energy. You gain total concealment against all attacks that target you until the beginning of your next turn.

### VANGUARD STRIKE

Devoted Spirit (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You batter aside your foes defenses with a vicious, overwhelming attack, leaving him vulnerable to your allies' blows.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against an opponent you threaten. If this attack hits, all your allies gain a +4 bonus on ranged and melee attacks against that target until the start of your next turn.

## DIAMOND MIND

Diamond Mind maneuvers allow a warrior to use her cunning, intellect, and feel for the battlefield against her enemies. Time seems to flow slower to a Diamond Mind initiate. The bastard sword (or katana), rapier, shortspear, and trident are this discipline's favored weapons. Concentration is the Diamond Mind discipline's key skill.

### ACTION BEFORE THOUGHT

Diamond Mind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 2, warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your supreme sense of the battlefield, unmatched martial training, and simple, intuitive sense of danger allow you to act faster than the speed of thought. When a spell or other attack strikes you, you move a split second before you are even aware of the threat.*

Your mind is a keenly honed weapon. Other warriors rely on their physical talents. You know that a mix of mental acuity and martial training, along with a strong sword arm, is an unbeatable combination. This maneuver epitomizes your approach. Your mind, rather than your raw reflexes, dictates your defenses.

You can use this maneuver any time you would be required to make a Reflex save. Roll a Concentration check instead of the Reflex save and use the result of that check to determine the save's success. You must use this maneuver before you roll the Reflex save. A result of a natural 1 on your Concentration check is not an automatic failure.

### AVALANCHE OF BLADES

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*In a flashing blur of steel, you unleash a devastating volley of deadly attacks against your enemy, striking it again and again.*

You lash at an opponent. If your attack hits, you repeat the same attack again and again at nearly superhuman speed, allowing you to score multiple hits in a blur of activity. Unfortunately, as soon as an attack misses, your tempo breaks, and this delicate maneuver crumbles into a flurry of wasted motion.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack against an opponent. If that attack hits, resolve your damage as normal. You can then make another attack against that foe with a –4 penalty on your attack roll. If that attack hits, you can make another attack against that opponent with a –8 penalty. You continue to make additional attacks, each one with an additional –4 penalty, until you miss or your opponent is reduced to –1 hit points or fewer. You must direct all these attacks at a single foe.

### BOUNDING ASSAULT

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You spring across the battlefield, using your focus and ability to act quickly to make an attack while moving.*

You combine speed and power into a deadly combination. With this maneuver, you move across the battlefield in a blur, pausing only to deliver a ferocious attack.

As part of this maneuver, make a double move. After you move, you can also make a melee attack. You gain a +2 bonus on this attack. This maneuver is considered a charge attack when determining if feats and other abilities apply to your attack.

### DIAMOND DEFENSE

Diamond Mind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You steel yourself against an opponent's spell, drawing on your focus and training to overcome its effect.*

You can initiate this maneuver any time you would be required to make a saving throw. You gain a bonus on that save equal to your initiator level. You must use this maneuver before you roll the saving throw.

### DIAMOND NIGHTMARE BLADE

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You spot a single fatal flaw in your opponent's defenses. With a single attack, you put all the force of your supreme focus into a single, crippling blow.*

You must make a Concentration check as part of this maneuver. The DC of this check is the target creature's AC. You then make a single melee attack against your target, also as part of the maneuver. If your Concentration check succeeds, this attack deals four times your normal melee damage. If your check fails, your attack is made with a –2 penalty and doesn't deal any additional damage.

If your strike is a critical hit, you stack the multipliers as normal (PH 304).

### DISRUPTING BLOW

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Will negates
**Duration:** 1 round

*With a combination of brute force, keen timing, and exacting aim, you force your opponent into an awkward position that ruins his next action.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack. If this attack hits, your target takes normal melee damage and must make a Will save (DC 15 + your Str modifier) or be unable to take any actions for 1 round. The target does not suffer any other drawbacks or penalties. He can still make attacks of opportunity but is unable to take immediate actions until his next turn.

### EMERALD RAZOR

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2, warblade 2
**Prerequisite:** One Diamond Mind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You stare at your enemy, studying his every move. You mentally probe his defenses in search of a weakness. A lesser warrior could spent long minutes pondering this problem, but you see an opening and seize upon it in an instant.*

Your understanding of combat, your keenly honed mind, and your capability to read your opponents make you a deadly combatant. When you focus your mind, even the most elusive opponent becomes an easy target.

As part of this maneuver, make a single melee attack against an opponent. This is a touch attack rather than a standard melee attack. If you hit, you deal normal melee damage.

### HEARING THE AIR

Diamond Mind (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

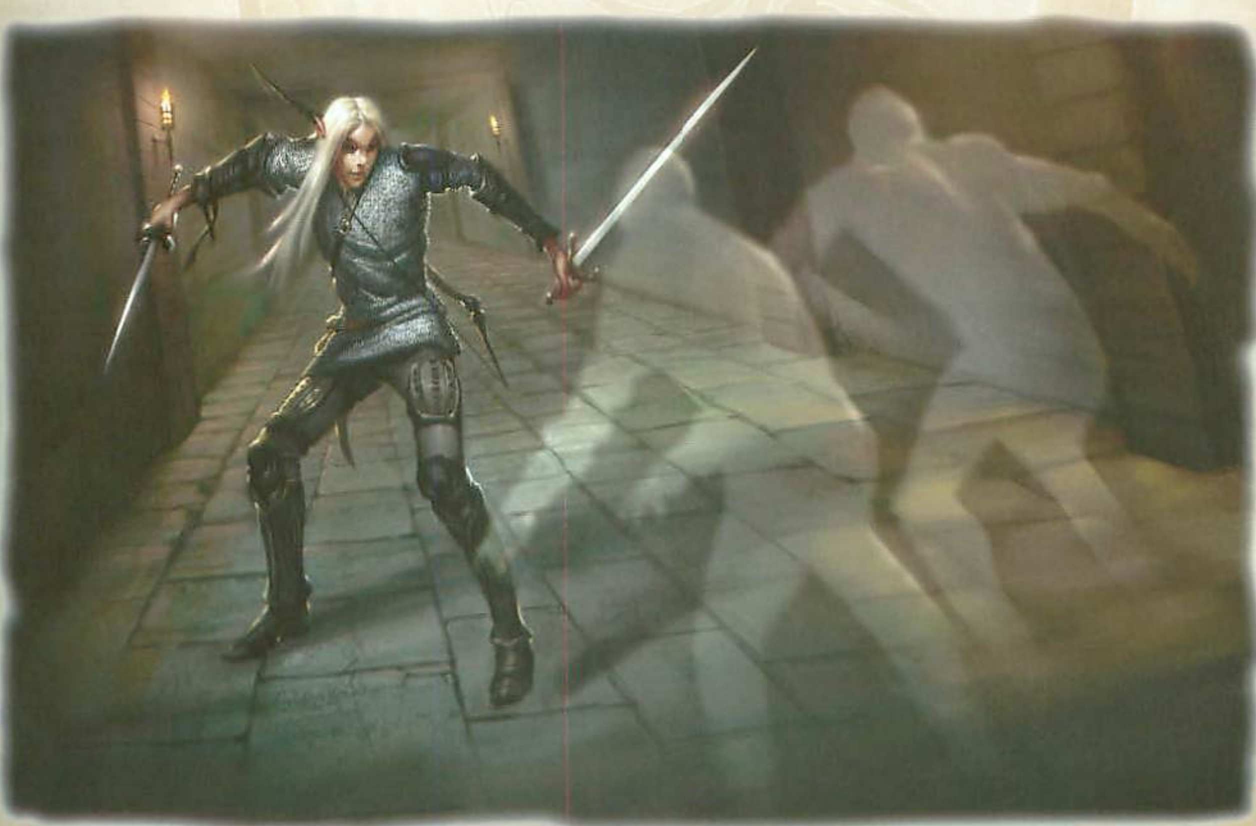
*Your perception becomes so fine that you can hear the tiniest flutter of air moving past you. Invisible foes and other hidden threats become as plain as day in the area of your heightened senses.*

Drawing on your combat training, sharpened senses, and capability to predict your enemy's moves, you become a faultless sentinel on the battlefield. Even the smallest detail or stealthiest enemy cannot hope to evade your notice.

While you are in this stance, you gain blindsense out to 30 feet and a +5 insight bonus on Listen checks.

### INSIGHTFUL STRIKE

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3



*A warblade senses the presence of invisible enemies by hearing the air*

Illus. by J. Nentrup

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You study your opponent and spot a weak point in her armor. With a quick, decisive strike, you take advantage of this weakness with a devastating attack.*

Your mind rather than your physical power allows you to deal grievous injuries to your foes. When you attack, your training and mental focus allow you to score a telling blow.

As part of this maneuver, make a melee attack. If this attack hits, you do not deal normal damage. Instead, you make a Concentration check and deal damage equal to the check result. Your Strength modifier, your weapon's magical properties (if any), and any other extra damage you normally deal do not modify this check (including extra damage from class abilities, feats, or spells).

### INSIGHTFUL STRIKE, GREATER

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your keen eye picks out the slightest imperfection in your opponent's defenses. Your weapon becomes a tool of your mind.*

This maneuver functions like insightful strike, except that you deal damage equal to 2 × your Concentration check result.

### MIND OVER BODY

Diamond Mind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your training and mental toughness allow you to use your focus to overcome physical threats. By focusing your mind, you ignore the effect of a deadly poison or debilitating sickness.*

Your diligent training and intense mental focus combine to allow you to overcome physical threats with the raw power of your mind.

You can use this maneuver any time you would be required to make a Fortitude save. Make a Concentration check instead of the Fortitude save and use the result of that check to determine the save's success. You must use this maneuver before you attempt the Fortitude save. A result of a natural 1 on your Concentration check is not an automatic failure.

### MIND STRIKE

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Will negates

*You strike your opponent's head, rattling his senses and causing him to lose focus.*

As a warrior who fights with your mind as well as your brawn, you know that attacking a foe's senses is just as valuable as sapping his strength. With this attack, you leave an opponent befuddled and vulnerable.

As part of this maneuver, make a melee attack. If this attack hits, your target must make a Will save (DC 14 + your Str modifier) or take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage. The target ignores the Wisdom damage on a successful save but still takes weapon damage normally.

### MOMENT OF ALACRITY

Diamond Mind (Boost)
**Class:** Swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*You step into a space between heartbeats and act again while your enemies are still reacting to your last strike.*

You can improve your initiative count for the next round and all subsequent rounds of the current encounter. When you initiate this maneuver, your initiative count improves by 20, and your place in the initiative order changes accordingly. This modifier applies at the end of the round. Your place in the initiative order changes to reflect moment of alacrity's effect starting with the next round.

### MOMENT OF PERFECT MIND

Diamond Mind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your mental focus and martial study have rendered your will into an unbreakable iron wall. When someone targets you with a spell that seeks to erode your willpower, you steel yourself against the attack.*

Between your devoted study, iron will, and supreme focus, you have learned to resist attempts to subvert your willpower. When you feel such an effect try to cloud your mind, you can draw on untapped reserves of energy to counter the attempt.

You can use this maneuver any time you would be required to make a Will save. Make a Concentration check instead of the Will save and use the result of that check to determine the save's success. You must use this maneuver before you attempt the Will save. A result of a natural 1 on your Concentration check is not an automatic failure.

### PEARL OF BLACK DOUBT

Diamond Mind (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Diamond Mind maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*With every miss, your opponents become more uncertain, their doubt growing like an irritating pearl in the mouth of a helpless oyster.*

You prey on your opponents' fear and lack of confidence. Each failed attack against you reminds them that their skill cannot hope to match yours.

When you enter this stance, you become more difficult to hit with each successive attack that misses you. Each time an opponent misses you with a melee attack, you gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC. This bonus lasts until the start of your next turn and is cumulative for the round. The bonus applies to any attacks made by all opponents until the beginning of your next turn.

## QUICKSILVER MOTION

Diamond Mind (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*In the blink of an eye, you make your move. Your speed, reflexes, and boundless confidence combine to allow you to make a fast, bold move that catches your foes off guard.*

With a burst of energy, you move forward to press an attack, draw an item from your backpack, or take some other move action. Your training, mental acuity, and drive allow you to move with greater speed and confidence than other warriors.

This maneuver requires a swift action to initiate. You can take a free move action after you initiate this maneuver. You can use any of the options available for a move action. You can then use the rest of your actions as normal. For example, you could use this maneuver to move next to a foe, then take a full attack action. You could move, then make a charge attack, and so forth. The move action you gain from this maneuver provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

## RAPID COUNTER

Diamond Mind (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You lash out, your weapon a blur, hammering at the slightest gap that appears in your foe's defenses.*

This maneuver allows you to make a free attack against a reckless enemy. When a foe provokes an attack of opportunity from you, you can initiate this maneuver. As part of this maneuver, you make an immediate melee attack against the foe that provoked the attack of opportunity. This attack does not replace the normal attack of opportunity you receive. You can also use this maneuver before making your normal attack of opportunity when an opponent provokes (or vice versa).

The attack granted by the maneuver is not an extra attack of opportunity. You can initiate this maneuver before, after, in addition to, or instead of making an attack of opportunity against an opponent (thus possibly saving your attack of opportunity to use against another enemy later in the round).

## RUBY NIGHTMARE BLADE

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*With a moment's thought, you instantly perceive the deadliest place to strike your enemy as you study her defenses, note gaps in her armor, and read subtle but important clues in how she carries herself or maintains her fighting stance.*

The ruby nightmare blade is a favored finishing move of warriors who study the Diamond Mind discipline. By intently analyzing your foe's stance and moves, you find the precise spot that you must strike to end the fight with a decisive blow.

You attempt a Concentration check as part of this maneuver, using the target creature's AC as the DC of the check. You then make a single melee attack against your target. This attack is also made as part of this maneuver. If your Concentration check succeeds, this melee attack deals double normal melee damage. If your check fails, your attack is made with a –2 penalty and deals only normal melee damage.

If your strike is a critical hit, you stack the multipliers as normal (PH 304).

## SAPPHIRE NIGHTMARE BLADE

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your study your enemy for a brief moment, watching his defensive maneuvers and making a strike timed to take advantage of a lull in his vigilance.*

The sapphire nightmare blade is one of the most basic, but important, maneuvers that a Diamond Mind adept studies. It illustrates that a keen mind can pierce even the toughest defenses.

You attempt a Concentration check as part of this maneuver, using the target creature's AC as the DC of the check. You then make a single melee attack against your target. The attack is also part of this maneuver. If your Concentration check succeeds, the target is flat-footed against your attack, and you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage. If your check fails, your attack is made with a –2 penalty and deals normal damage.

## STANCE OF ALACRITY

Diamond Mind (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Your mind and body meld, granting you an edge in combat. You move slightly faster than normal due to a combination of confidence, training, and clarity of mind. This slight edge adds up with each action.*

Your mental swiftness translates to physical action on the battlefield. You are constantly on edge, allowing you to react to multiple attacks and threats. Most warriors can only manage a single counter move each round.

While you are in this stance, you can use one counter per round without taking an immediate action. You cannot use the same maneuver two times in a round. In essence, one counter you use during the round does not require an immediate action. If you have already taken an immediate action within the past round, such as casting a *feather fall* spell, you can still use this stance to initiate a counter.

### STANCE OF CLARITY

Diamond Mind (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You focus your efforts on a single opponent, studying his moves and preparing an attack. Your other opponents fade from sight as your mind locks onto your target.*

This stance allows you to focus on a single opponent to the exclusion of all others. You read your foe's fighting stance, his favored attacks, and the methods he used to train. By combining these factors into a single analysis of his abilities, you see how to foil his attacks.

While you are in this stance, you must choose a single opponent as your target at the start of your turn. You gain a +2 insight bonus to AC against that foe until you change the target of this stance. You take a –2 penalty to AC against all other opponents while using stance of clarity.

### TIME STANDS STILL

Diamond Mind (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 9, warblade 9
**Prerequisite:** Four Diamond Mind maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*The raindrops themselves stand still as you act at the speed of thought. You move like a blur, catching your enemies by surprise with a complex action carried out in a tiny fraction of the time normally needed to complete it.*

In an unmatched burst of speed, agility, and decisive action, you move more quickly than the eye can follow. You can lash out with your blade, striking your opponent so rapidly that observers can't keep track of your moves.

As part of this maneuver, you can use a full attack action two times in succession. Take your first full attack as normal. Once you have resolved those attacks, you can then take another full attack action. You must resolve these actions separately. You cannot combine the attacks provided by both actions as you wish. Instead, you must take them separately and in order as normal for a full attack.

## IRON HEART

The Iron Heart discipline focuses on pure weapon skill. Its students learn to complete fighting maneuvers that border on the supernatural. The Iron Heart's preferred weapons are the bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, longsword, and two-bladed sword. Its key skill is Balance, because body control, good footing, and impeccable timing are important to completing Iron Heart maneuvers.

### ABSOLUTE STEEL

Iron Heart (Stance)
**Level:** Warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Iron Heart maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You shift your weight to the back of your feet and hold your blade carefully forward at the ready. Your muscles twitch slightly as you prepare to dodge the next attack you face.*

The absolute steel stance allows you to enhance your mobility and speed. You move quickly, keep a sharp eye on your enemies, and are ready to instantly sidestep any incoming attacks.

While you are in this stance, you gain a +10-foot enhancement bonus to your speed. If you move at least 10 feet during your turn, you gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn.

### ADAMANTINE HURRICANE

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Targets:** One or more adjacent creatures you threaten

*A warblade strikes in the blink of an eye using time stands still*

Illus. by K. Andrasofszky

*In a blur of motion, you make a short, twisting leap in the air. As you turn, your weapon flashes through the enemies around you like a blazing comet. As you drop back to the ground in your fighting stance, your enemies crumple to the ground around you.*

You sweep your weapon in a circle around you, striking out at nearby enemies. You strike with the speed and ferocity of a lightning bolt, forcing your enemies to rely on their reflexes for protection rather than their armor and shields.

You make two melee attacks against each adjacent opponent you threaten when you initiate this maneuver. You receive a +4 bonus on each of these attacks, which are otherwise made with your highest attack bonus.

## DANCING BLADE FORM

Iron Heart (Stance)
**Level:** Warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You strike forward like a slithering snake, extending yourself almost beyond your ability to maintain your balance. Your foe stumbles backward, surprised that you could reach him from such a great distance.*

By carefully distributing your weight and establishing a steady, rugged posture, you can reach out and strike opponents with your melee attacks at a greater than normal distance. A warrior with less training and expertise would fall flat on his face attempting this maneuver. You, on the other hand, have the grace, focus, and skill needed to complete this complex move.

While you are in this stance, you gain a bonus to your reach during your turn. When you make a melee attack, your reach increases by 5 feet. Your reach is not improved when it is not your turn, such as when you make an attack of opportunity. You cannot improve your reach by more than 5 feet by using this ability in conjunction with other maneuvers.

## DAZING STRIKE

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Through focus, raw power, and expert aim, you make a mighty attack against your foe, leaving him temporarily knocked senseless by your attack.*

The proper application of force to just the right part of a foe's anatomy allows you to disrupt his actions. While he stumbles back, senseless, you press the advantage.

You make a single melee attack as part of this strike. If this attack hits, the target takes melee damage normally and must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + your Str modifier) or be dazed for 1 round.

## DISARMING STRIKE

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You chop at your foe's hand, causing a grievous injury and forcing him to drop his weapon.*

This maneuver allows you to combine a disarm attempt with a normal attack. You make a single melee attack as part of this strike. If this attack hits and deals damage, you can also attempt to disarm your opponent (PH 155). This disarm attempt does not provoke attacks of opportunity, nor is there any risk that your foe can disarm you.

## EXORCISM OF STEEL

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Iron Heart maneuver
**Initiation Action:** Standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Will half

*You attack, striking not your foe, but his weapon, sending a shockwave up his arm that leaves him unable to strike with full force.*

Your mastery of the Iron Heart style has taught you much about the power within a blade, and you can use this knowledge to not only enhance your own ability but also to deprive others of that power.

When you initiate this maneuver, you attack your opponent's weapon (PH 158). This attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If you succeed, your foe takes a –4 penalty on melee damage rolls for 1 minute. The wielder of the weapon can attempt a Will save (DC 13 + your Str modifier) to halve this penalty.

You can use this maneuver only against manufactured weapons. You cannot use it against natural weapons.

## FINISHING MOVE

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You deliver a devastating strike against a wounded foe, aiming to finish him off once and for all.*

Iron Heart teaches that it is best to finish off a foe with as little effort as possible, the better to save your strength for your remaining enemies. When you use this maneuver, you throw yourself on the offensive with little thought to your defenses. If this attack strikes home, it might end a fight several crucial seconds early.

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against a creature. This attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. If the target's current hit points are less than its full normal hit points, the attack instead deals an extra 6d6 points of damage. If its hit points are equal to or less than one-half its full normal hit points,

Illus. by M. Phillips

the attack instead deals an extra 14d6 points of damage.

### IRON HEART ENDURANCE

Iron Heart (Boost)
**Level:** Warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You push aside the pain of your injuries to fight on past mortal limits.*

If you have half or fewer of your full normal hit points remaining, you can initiate this maneuver to heal hit points equal to 2 × your level.

### IRON HEART FOCUS

Iron Heart (Counter)
**Level:** Warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*With a last-second burst of speed, you summon reserves of mental and physical will and throw off the effects of your enemy's attack.*

Your training in the Iron Heart discipline grants you excellent reflexes, mental toughness, and stamina. You can draw upon your training and focus to overcome a variety of deadly effects.

As an immediate action, you can reroll a saving throw you have just made. You must accept the result of this second roll, even if the new result is lower than your initial roll.

### IRON HEART SURGE

Iron Heart
**Level:** Warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Iron Heart maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** See text

*By drawing on your mental strength and physical fortitude, you break free of a debilitating state that might otherwise defeat you.*

*A half-orc warblade initiates a finishing move and rids the world of a fiendish foe*

Your fighting spirit, dedication, and training allow you to overcome almost anything to defeat your enemies. When you use this maneuver, select one spell, effect, or other condition currently affecting you and with a duration of 1 or more rounds. That effect ends immediately. You also surge with confidence and vengeance against your enemies, gaining a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

### LIGHTNING RECOVERY

Iron Heart (Counter)
**Level:** Warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your foe twists out of the way of your initial attack, but your weapon becomes a blur as you reverse direction and strike at him again with lightning speed. In the blink of an eye, you complete your attack and resume your defensive posture.*

This maneuver embodies the ethos of speed and energy that the Iron Heart tradition teaches. If one of your melee attacks misses, you can initiate this maneuver to reroll that attack roll with a +2 bonus.

### LIGHTNING THROW

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** 30-ft. line
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

*You throw your weapon through the air, sending it flying end over end to strike with uncanny accuracy and terrible force. It leaves in its wake a trail of battered enemies.*

The Iron Heart tradition's more esoteric teachings allow a student to transform any melee weapon into a thrown projectile. By focusing your concentration and attuning your senses to your weapon's balance, you can throw almost anything.

When you use this strike, you make a single melee attack (even though you are throwing your weapon). You deal damage to each creature in the maneuver's area equal to your normal melee damage (including damage from your Strength modifier, feats, magical abilities on your weapon, and so forth), plus an extra 12d6 points of damage. Each creature in the attack's area can make a Reflex save with a DC equal to the result of your attack roll. A successful save halves the damage dealt.

Your weapon automatically returns to your hand at the end of the round.

### MANTICORE PARRY

Iron Heart (Counter)
**Level:** Warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You block an enemy's attack with a lightning-quick parry, then deflect it toward a different target. Your foe can barely control its momentum as its attack now slams into an ally.*

When you initiate this maneuver, you can attempt to block an enemy's melee attack that targets you and redirect it to another target adjacent to you. Make a melee attack roll. If your result is greater than your foe's attack roll, you bat aside the strike and direct it against a target of your choice that stands adjacent to you. You must decide whether to initiate this maneuver after the enemy attacks, but before you know whether or not the attack you are attempting to deflect actually hits. If the attack misses, you can still attempt to deflect it.

If you succeed in deflecting the attack, use the result of your opponent's attack roll to determine if it strikes the new target.

This maneuver functions only against armed melee attacks. You cannot use it against unarmed attacks, natural weapons, or touch spells.

### MITHRAL TORNADO

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** All adjacent opponents

*Your weapon becomes a blur of motion as you swing it in a tight arc over your head. Once you build up enough speed, you explode into a sweeping attack that chops into the enemies around you.*

When you initiate this strike, you make a melee attack against every opponent adjacent to you. Resolve each attack separately. You gain a +2 bonus on each of these attacks, which are otherwise made at your highest attack bonus.

### PUNISHING STANCE

Iron Heart (Stance)
**Level:** Warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You chop down violently with your weapon, lending extra force to your blows. These attacks come at a cost, as your enemies slash at your undefended legs and flanks.*

You hold your weapon overhead, allowing you to chop down with superior force. However, this fighting stance leaves you vulnerable to an opponent's attacks. Only an initiate of the Iron Heart tradition can manage the perilous balance between trading attack power for defense. A lesser warrior would leave himself nearly helpless to resist an opponent's attacks.

While you are in this stance, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage with all melee attacks. You also take a –2 penalty to AC, because this fighting stance emphasizes power over a defensive posture.

### SCYTHING BLADE

Iron Heart (Boost)
**Level:** Warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You strike at one foe with a long, high backhand cut, then make a quick turn to continue the stroke against another nearby enemy.*

You swing your weapon in a wide, deadly arc. With your supreme skill and martial training, you aim your attack so that as you strike one opponent, you set yourself up perfectly to make a second attack against a different foe. As your weapon strikes one opponent, it cuts into him, then ricochets to your second target.

If the first melee attack you make during your turn hits, you can immediately make a free attack at your highest attack bonus against a different enemy that you threaten. You can only gain one free attack each time you initiate this maneuver, regardless of how many successful attacks you make in this round.

### STEEL WIND

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** Two creatures

*You swing your weapon in a broad, deadly arc, striking two foes with a single, mighty blow.*

Through a combination of sheer power and unmatched talent, you make an attack that injures multiple opponents. As you initiate this strike, you make two melee attacks, each against a different foe that you threaten. Resolve each attack separately.

### STEELY STRIKE

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round; see text

*You focus yourself for a single, accurate attack, shrugging off your opponent's blows and ignoring the need for defense as you make your assault.*

The Iron Heart discipline teaches focus, allowing you to engage and defeat one opponent at a time. Your other enemies mean nothing to you as you press your attack.

You make a single melee attack as part of this strike. You gain a +4 bonus on the attack roll. All opponents other than the one you attacked gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls against you for 1 round.

### STRIKE OF PERFECT CLARITY

Iron Heart (Strike)
**Level:** Warblade 9
**Prerequisite:** Four Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your supreme focus and perfect fighting form allow you to make a single, devastating attack. You execute a flawless strike to drop your foe with a single attack.*

The ultimate Iron Heart maneuver teaches the precise, perfect cut necessary to slay almost any creature. Only the mightiest foes can withstand this attack. Adepts of the Iron Heart tradition seek to use this attack to end fights as quickly as possible. You might open a fight with a quick flurry of attacks, but once a foe is injured, you seek to end the battle with this decisive strike.

You make a single melee attack as part of this strike. If your attack hits, it deals an extra 100 points of damage (in addition to your normal melee damage).

### SUPREME BLADE PARRY

Iron Heart (Stance)
**Level:** Warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Iron Heart maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You drop into a relaxed pose, allowing your defenses to flow naturally and easily. Your blade lashes out to absorb or deflect each attack you face, blunting the force of your enemies' blows.*

As a student of the Iron Heart discipline, you learn that a simple flick of the wrist or turn of the blade can transform a deadly strike into a wild miss. In battle, you enter a steady rhythm that makes you frustratingly difficult to fight. You disrupt each attack with a perfectly timed counter, leaving your foes' strikes weak and ineffectual.

While you are in this stance, you gain damage reduction 5/— against any opponent that does not catch you flat-footed. To gain this benefit, you must be proficient with the weapon you carry. You gain this benefit while unarmed only if you have the Improved Unarmed Strike feat.

### WALL OF BLADES

Iron Heart (Counter)
**Level:** Warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your weapon sways back and forth in your hand, ready to block incoming blows. With the speed of a thunderbolt, you clash your weapon against your foe's blade as he attempts to attack.*

Your weapon mastery transforms your blade into an extension of your arm, allowing you to wield it with the speed and timing needed to make a precise block.

When an enemy makes a melee or ranged attack against you, you can initiate this counter to oppose that attack by making an attack roll with any melee weapon you are holding. Use the higher of your AC or your attack roll as your effective AC against the incoming attack. You can't use this maneuver if you are denied your Dexterity bonus to AC against your attacker. You can decide to use this ability after you learn the result of your opponent's attack.

## SETTING SUN

The Setting Sun discipline teaches its initiates to turn their opponents' strength against them. With a quick shift in stance and a carefully aimed attack, a Setting Sun warrior sends a charging enemy tumbling in a new direction. Setting Sun's preferred weapons are the quarterstaff, short sword, nunchaku, and unarmed strike. The discipline's key skill is Sense Motive.

### BAFFLING DEFENSE

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Prerequisite:** One Setting Sun maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You crouch balanced on one foot, hands held high over your head. Your foe hesitates, unsure of how to attack you in this unlikely stance.*

If your opponent strikes you on his turn, you can replace your AC with the result of a Sense Motive check as an immediate action. You must decide whether to initiate this maneuver before you know the result of your opponent's attack (but after the attack is declared). Your Sense Motive check applies to only one attack. You must be aware of the attack to which you will apply the effect of this maneuver. If you are flat-footed against the incoming attack, you cannot use this maneuver.

### BALLISTA THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Touch and 60 ft.; see text
**Target:** Creature touched
**Area:** 60-ft. line

*You grab your opponent and spin like a top, swinging him around before throwing him at your opponents like a bolt from a ballista.*

This maneuver functions like mighty throw (page 73), except as noted here.

As part of this maneuver, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against your foe. You can then make a trip attempt against your enemy. You gain a +4 bonus on the ability check.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw him in a 60-foot line. The target and all creatures in this area take 6d6 points of damage. The thrown creature lands prone at the end of this line. You must place the target in an empty space. If the space at the end of the line is occupied, your opponent falls prone in the open space closest to the line's endpoint.

### CLEVER POSITIONING

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Reflex partial

*With a swift flurry of motion, you knock you foe off balance, slip into his space, and force him into the spot you just occupied.*

You make a melee attack, and while your opponent is slightly off balance from your blow, you find the leverage needed to pull him into your space while moving into his space.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack against a target. If your attack hits, the target takes damage normally and must make a Reflex save (DC 12 + your Dex modifier). If this save fails, you swap positions with the target. If the target is Large or larger, you can occupy any of the squares that make up its space. The target must in turn occupy the square, or one of the squares, you previously occupied. You cannot use this maneuver if you or the target would end up sharing the same space as another creature or an impassable terrain feature, such as a wall. If your target occupies a larger space than you do, he chooses his final position according to the guidelines given above.

## COMET THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** One Setting Sun maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Creature touched; see text
**Saving Throw:** Reflex partial; see text

*You use your foe's momentum against him, throwing him through the air to crash into a second enemy.*

This maneuver functions like mighty throw (page 73), except as noted here.

As part of this maneuver, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against your foe. You can then make a trip attempt against your enemy. You gain a +4 bonus on the ability check.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw him up to 10 feet away from you in a direction of your choice. You select your enemy's destination square. The target falls prone in that space and takes 4d6 points of damage. For every 5 points by which you win the opposed check, you gain an additional 5 feet of throw range. For example, if you win by 10, you can place your foe in any space within 20 feet of you. You can throw your opponent into a space occupied by a second foe. In this case, the opponent in the target square also takes 4d6 points of damage and is knocked prone. A Reflex save (DC 14 + your Str modifier) halves this damage and allows the second target to remain standing. The thrown creature then falls prone in a clear space of your choice adjacent to the second target.

## COUNTER CHARGE

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*With a quick sidestep, you send a charging opponent sprawling.*

With this counter, you can attempt to redirect a creature that intends to make a charge attack against you. Immediately before the creature makes its charge attack, make your choice of an opposed Strength or Dexterity check against it. The target makes its check using the same ability you chose for your check.

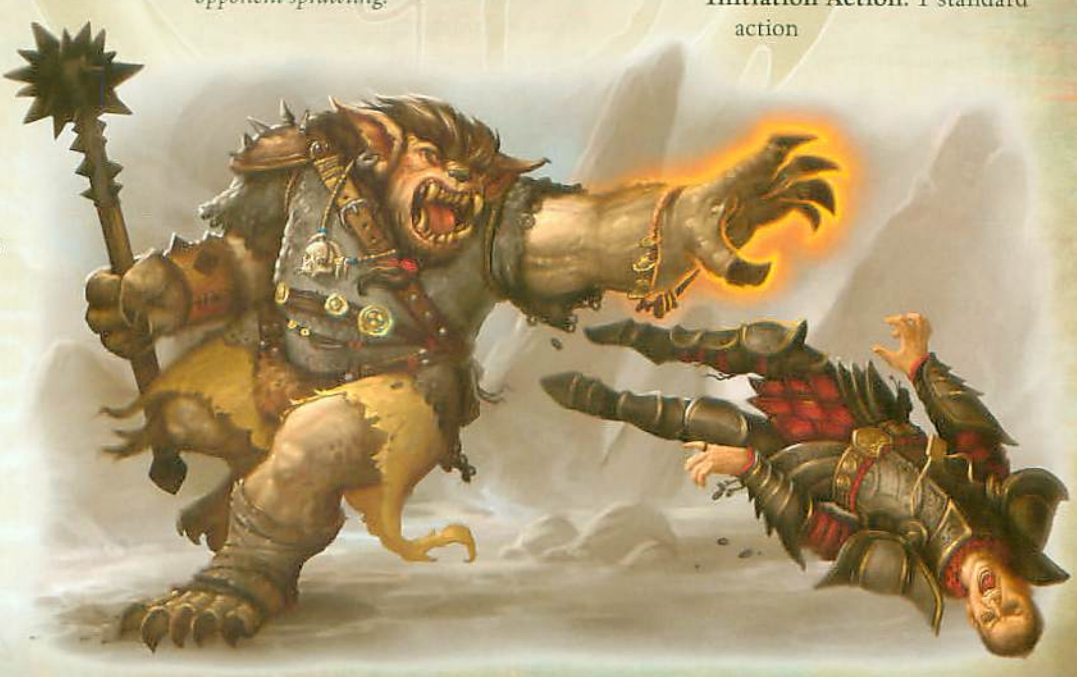
If you are of a larger size category than the attacking creature, you use your superior bulk to redirect your foe and gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check (if you opt for a Strength check). If you are of a smaller size category, you use leverage, misdirection, and trickery to gain a +4 bonus on your Dexterity check (if you use that option).

If you succeed on the Strength or Dexterity check, the creature does not get to attack you. You can then move it up to 2 squares in a direction of your choice away from you.

If you fail the Strength or Dexterity check, the creature gains a +2 bonus on its charge attack, in addition to the normal +2 bonus from taking the charge attack action.

## DEVASTATING THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Setting Sun maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action



*A bugbear swordsage surprises his foe with a devastating throw*

Illus. by H. Lyon

**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Creature touched

*Seizing your foe by the arm, you spin in a quick half-circle and hurl him headlong away from you.*

This maneuver functions like mighty throw (page 73), except as noted here.

To set up a devastating throw, you must move at least 15 feet.

As part of this maneuver, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against your foe. You can then make a trip attempt against your enemy. You gain a +4 bonus on the ability check.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw him up to 10 feet away from you. The target falls prone in the destination space and takes 2d6 points of damage. You choose where he lands. For every 5 points by which you win the opposed check, you gain an additional 5 feet of throw distance. For example, if you win by 10, you can place your foe in any space within 20 feet of you. You must place the target in an empty space. If you lack the distance to throw your target into a clear space, he falls prone in his current space.

## FEIGNED OPENING

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Setting Sun maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You show your opponent a seemingly fatal mistake in your defenses, but easily avoid the ensuing attack and simultaneously draw your foe into overextending. As she fights to regain her balance, you make a swift counterattack.*

You can use this maneuver when an opponent attempts an attack of opportunity against you. As you provoke the attack of opportunity, you position yourself in such a way as to force your opponent to throw herself off balance to strike you. Even if she succeeds in striking you, your foe might regret her attack as your allies leap in to finish her.

When your enemy makes an attack of opportunity against you, but before you know the result of the attack, you can initiate this maneuver. If her attack misses, she provokes an attack of opportunity from you. If her attack of opportunity hits you, she provokes an attack of opportunity from any of your allies who threaten her.

## FOOL'S STRIKE

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*A creature strikes, but you turn the blow straight back at it.*

When an enemy attacks you on its turn, you can attempt to block the blow and send it back at that creature. You step into the attack and redirect it. This maneuver pits your skill against that of your foe.

If an opponent attacks you, you can initiate this maneuver to make an opposed attack roll as an immediate action. If your foe's result is higher, he attacks you as normal. If your result is higher, your foe rolls damage as normal for the attack and takes that much damage.

## GHOSTLY DEFENSE

Setting Sun (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You lurk within concealing mist, luring your opponent into attacking you, only to dodge out of the way and direct your enemy's blow at an unwitting ally.*

You are a ghost in the mist, capable of turning a foe against her allies. By gauging your opponent's fighting stance, timing your dodge correctly, and placing yourself in the right position, you can lead her into attacking one of her allies rather than you. When your foe strikes, you duck out of the way. As she follows through with her attack, she inadvertently attacks an ally.

You gain this stance's benefit when an opponent's attack against you has a miss chance, such as from concealment. Whenever an opponent's melee or ranged attack misses you because of this miss chance, you can choose to change the target of the attack from you to another eligible target (other than your attacker). For a melee attack, the new target must be within your opponent's reach and adjacent to you. For a ranged attack, the new target must be adjacent to you, and your opponent must have line of effect to him. Use the result of the original attack to determine if it hits the new target. Your foe does not check again for a miss chance, as you guide the attack directly to the new target. This ability applies only once per attack. If you use ghostly defense to redirect an attack against a foe using this stance, he does not have the option to redirect the attack again.

You must be aware of an opponent's attack to gain the benefit of this stance. You cannot use it against attacks that catch you flat-footed.

## GIANT KILLING STYLE

Setting Sun (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Setting Sun maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You dart between a giant's legs, lashing at his inner ankles and other vulnerable areas while staying inside his reach where he cannot hope to parry your attacks.*

The Setting Sun school teaches a fighting style that emphasizes using an opponent's strength and momentum against him. The giant killing strike epitomizes this approach. By sizing up a larger opponent and studying his fighting stance and tendencies, you aim your strikes at vulnerable points on his lower body that he cannot defend effectively. You slice at tendons on your foe's feet, smash his knees, and cut into his hamstrings.

When you are in this stance, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +4 bonus on damage rolls against opponents of a larger size category than yours. This bonus applies to all attacks you make for the rest of your turn.

### HYDRA SLAYING STRIKE

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You take stock of an opponent's fighting style and make a single, carefully aimed attack that leaves the creature unable to make all of its attacks.*

You take careful aim at an enemy creature, striking it with the precise amount of force needed to push it off guard and leave it unable to bring all of its attacks to bear. Your opponent must spend critical seconds adjusting its guard and reevaluating its surroundings.

As part of this maneuver, make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, your target takes normal damage and cannot make a full attack on its next turn. Otherwise, it can act normally.

### MIGHTY THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Creature touched

*You use superior leverage and your Setting Sun training to send an opponent tumbling to the ground.*

As part of this maneuver, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against your foe. Resolve the throw as a trip attempt (PH 158), but you do not provoke attacks of opportunity, and your opponent cannot try to trip you if you lose the opposed check. You can use your Dexterity or Strength modifier, whichever is higher. You gain a +4 bonus on the ability check.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw it up to 10 feet away from you. The target falls prone in the destination space. You choose where it lands. You must place the target in an empty space. If you lack the distance to throw your target into a clear space, it falls prone in its current space.

An enemy you throw with this maneuver does not provoke attacks of opportunity for passing through enemies' threatened areas as part of the throw, and you can throw an enemy through occupied squares.

### MIRRORED PURSUIT

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*Your movements perfectly match your foe's, allowing you to move as she does. Try as she might to escape, you remain at her side.*

Your ability to study a foe and match her motions allows you to remain within arm's reach at all times. Your opponent cannot hope to escape you.

When an opponent adjacent to you moves, you can initiate this maneuver to immediately move to any square adjacent to her as soon as she stops moving, as long as the distance you cover is less than or equal to your speed. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

### SCORPION PARRY

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*You knock your opponent's attack aside, guiding his weapon into one of his allies.*

Your keen eye and ability to discern a foe's motives and intentions allow you to deflect an incoming attack into a different target.

If an opponent attacks you, you can initiate this maneuver to make an opposed attack roll as an immediate action. If your foe's result is higher, he attacks you as normal. If your result is higher, you can choose a creature adjacent to you and within your opponent's threatened area. The chosen creature is the new target of your foe's attack. Use your enemy's original attack roll result to determine if he strikes the new target.

### SHIFTING DEFENSE

Setting Sun (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You duck and move as you dodge your opponent's attacks. Slowly but surely, each attack gives you the opportunity to move across the battlefield.*

Your ability to read your opponents' moves and use their strength against them allows you to shift your position during a battle. Each failed attack gives you the split-second you need to move without drawing attacks.

While you are in this stance, you can make an immediate 5-foot step each time an opponent attacks you. Moving in this manner consumes one of your attacks of opportunity in the currrent round. You cannot move in this manner if you have no attacks of opportunity remaining. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

### SOARING THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Creature touched

*With a great shout, you send your opponent soaring through the air in a high arc. He slams back to the ground with a bone-crushing thud.*

As part of this maneuver, you must succeed on a melee touch attack against your foe. Resolve the throw as a trip attempt (PH 158), but you do not provoke attacks of opportunity, and your opponent cannot try to trip you if you lose the opposed check. You can use your Dexterity or Strength modifier, whichever is better. You gain a +4 bonus on the ability check.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw him up to 20 feet away from you. The target falls prone in the destination space and takes 8d6 points of damage. You choose where he lands. For every 5 points by which you win the opposed check, you gain an additional 5 feet of throw distance. For example, if you win by 10, you can place your foe in any space within 30 feet of you. You must place the target in an empty space. If you lack the distance to throw your target into a clear space, he falls prone in his current space.

An enemy you throw with this maneuver does not provoke attacks of opportunity for passing through enemies' threatened areas as part of the throw, and you can throw an enemy through occupied squares.

### STALKING SHADOW

Setting Sun (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*When the creature you are battling tries to back away, you step next to it in the blink of an eye, forcing it to stand and fight or suffer the consequences of withdrawal.*

Using your watchful eye and your ability to judge an opponent's actions, you move at precisely the same time your enemy begins to move.

If an opponent in a square adjacent to you moves, you can initiate this maneuver to make a 5-foot step into the space (or one of the squares) it occupied. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

### STEP OF THE WIND

Setting Sun (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

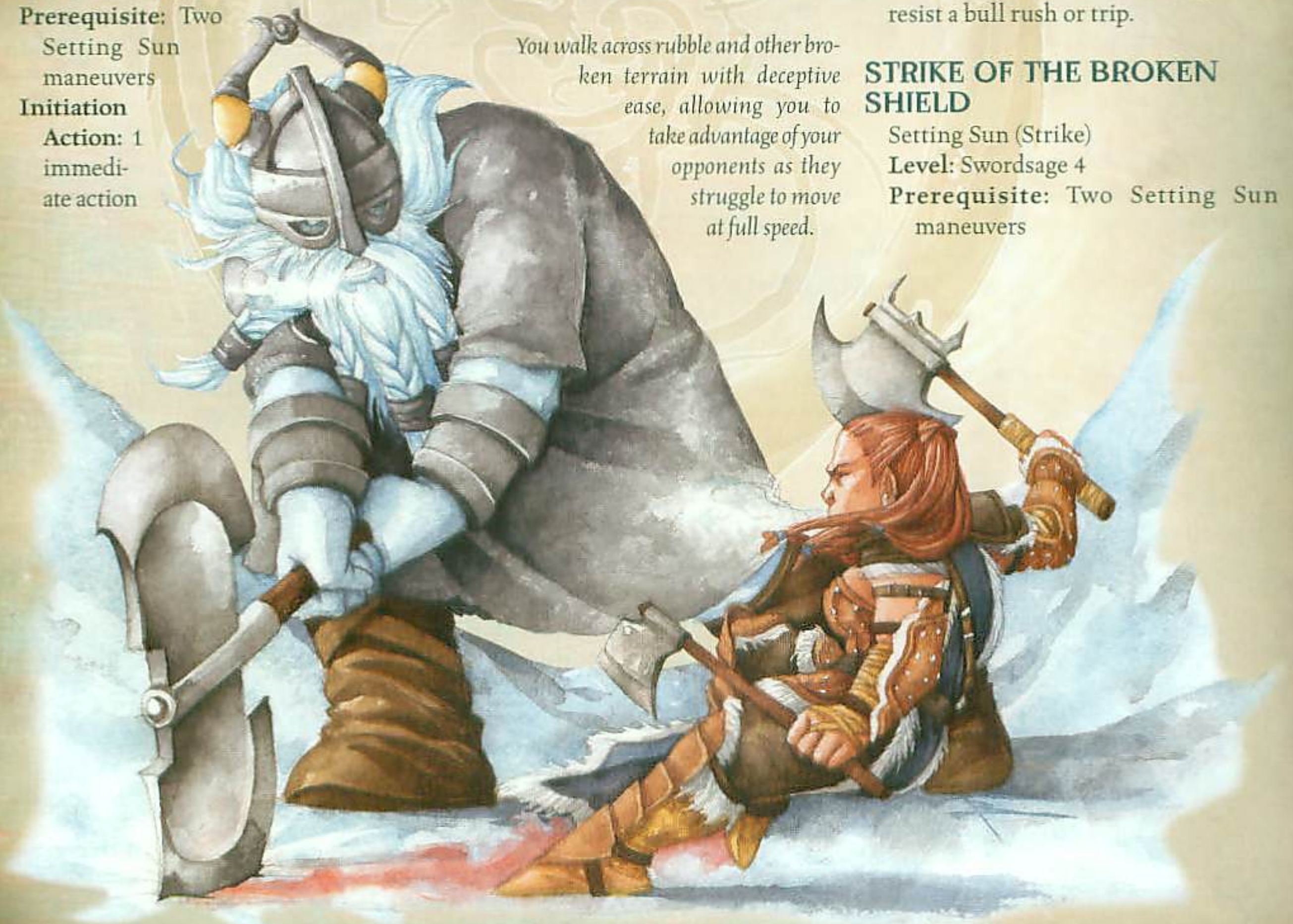
*You walk across rubble and other broken terrain with deceptive ease, allowing you to take advantage of your opponents as they struggle to move at full speed.*

You are so closely attuned to your environment that you easily pick out steady spots in rough terrain. While others struggle to move over broken ground, you slip across it with ease. When you fight on rough ground, you turn the uneven footing into an advantage. By gauging how an opponent distributes his weight, you strike at just the right moment and in the precise spot needed to send him tumbling to the ground.

While you are in this stance, you ignore penalties to speed, movement, or skill checks associated with movement (such as Tumble, Jump, and Climb checks) incurred by moving through difficult terrain. If you attack an opponent standing on difficult terrain while you are in this stance, and if that foe takes a movement penalty for moving through difficult terrain, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +4 bonus on Strength or Dexterity checks made as part of a bull rush or trip attempt against that enemy. You gain this bonus on checks made to either accomplish or resist a bull rush or trip.

### STRIKE OF THE BROKEN SHIELD

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Setting Sun maneuvers



Illus. by B. Trott

*A dwarf swordsage easily avoids a frost giant's blows using shifting defense*

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Reflex partial

*You study your opponent and deliver an attack precisely aimed to ruin his defenses and force him to scramble for his balance. While he struggles to ready himself, he becomes more vulnerable to your attacks.*

As part of this maneuver, make a single melee attack. This attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. In addition, the target must make a Reflex save (DC 14 + your Str modifier) or become flat-footed until the start of his next turn. The target takes damage (normal melee damage plus the extra damage) even if his save succeeds. If the target cannot be caught flat-footed (he has uncanny dodge, for example), he still takes the extra damage from the strike but otherwise suffers no ill effect.

### TORNADO THROW

Setting Sun (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 9
**Prerequisite:** Five Setting Sun maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One or more creatures

*Like a whirlwind, you twist and spin across the battlefield, tossing foes away left and right.*

As part of initiating this maneuver, you move up to your opponent, throw her aside, and move again. You must move at least 10 feet before making your throw. This movement and your movement after your throw provoke attacks of opportunity as normal. You can move up to double your speed as part of this maneuver. If you fail in your throw attempt, you can still move afterward. After every 10 feet you move, you can attempt another throw against the same opponent or a different foe.

To make your throw attempt, you must succeed on a melee touch attack. Resolve the throw as a trip attempt (PH 158), but you do not provoke attacks of opportunity, and your opponent cannot try to trip you if you lose the opposed check. You can use your Dexterity or Strength modifier on this check, whichever is better. You gain a +2 bonus on this check for every 5 feet that you have moved during your turn.

If you succeed in tripping your foe, you throw him up to 10 feet away from you. The target falls prone in the destination space and takes 2d6 points of damage. You choose where he lands. For every 5 points by which you win the opposed check, you gain an additional 5 feet of throw distance and the target takes an additional 1d6 points of damage. For example, if you win by 10, you can place your foe in any space within 20 feet of you, and he takes a total of 4d6 points of damage. You must place the target in an empty space. If you lack the distance to throw your target into a clear space, he falls prone in his current space.

An enemy you throw with this maneuver does not provoke attacks of opportunity for passing through enemies' threatened areas as part of the throw, and you can throw an enemy through occupied squares.

## SHADOW HAND

The Shadow Hand discipline teaches the arts of stealth, deception, and ambush. Its maneuvers allow a warrior to take on a shadowy aspect or to channel dark energy to sap an enemy's strength. This discipline's preferred weapons are the dagger, sai, short sword, spiked chain, siangham, and unarmed strike. Its key skill is Hide.

### ASSASSIN'S STANCE

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Shadow Hand maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*As your foe struggles to regain his defensive posture, you line up an exacting strike that hits with superior accuracy and deadly force.*

A shadow cast by a gap between two armored plates or a crease in a creature's thick hide calls to your weapon, allowing you to strike with deadly accuracy against an unprepared opponent.

While you are in this stance, you gain the sneak attack ability, if you do not already have it, which deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. If you already have the sneak attack class feature, your existing sneak attack ability deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. See the rogue class feature (PH 50) for a complete description of sneak attack.

### BALANCE ON THE SKY

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*With arms spread wide, you step onto the air.*

You gain the ability to use *air walk* (PH 196) on yourself only. You must keep at least one hand empty while using this stance. Moving upward requires you to spend 10 feet of movement for each 5 feet of elevation you gain.

You gain the benefit of *air walk* only while you maintain this stance. If for some reason your stance ends while you are in midair, you fall to the ground.

This stance is a supernatural ability.

### BLOODLETTING STRIKE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Spinning your blade in a butterflylike pattern, you administer a dozen precise cuts in an eyeblink. Blood flows from your foe's opened veins.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, your opponent takes 4 points of Constitution damage in addition to your attack's normal damage. A successful Fortitude save (DC 15 + your Wis modifier) reduces this Constitution damage to 2 points, although the foe still takes full normal melee damage.

## CHILD OF SHADOW

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*As you move, shadows flutter and swarm around you. Even under the bright desert sun, you are difficult to spot as long as you remain in motion.*

As an initiate of the Shadow Hand school, you learn to channel and control dark, shadowy energies. This energy flows around you like a concealing robe, hiding you from your opponents as they attempt to strike you.

If you move at least 10 feet during your turn, you gain concealment against all melee and ranged attacks until the start of your next turn. You also gain the standard benefits of concealment, but you cannot use this stance to hide in plain sight; you must still use some other terrain feature that normally allows you to use the Hide skill. The fluttering shadows make it difficult to specifically target you, but your enemies are aware of your position.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## CLINGING SHADOW STRIKE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Your weapon transforms into solid darkness. When it strikes home, it discharges in a swirling orb of shadow that engulfs your foe's eyes.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If it hits, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage, and your opponent must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 11 + your Wis modifier) or suffer a 20% miss chance on all melee and ranged attacks for 1 round. A successful save negates the miss chance, but not the extra damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

*Arrows miss a halfling swordsage using the child of shadows stance*

Illus. by S. Ellis

## CLOAK OF DECEPTION

Shadow Hand (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*The shadows around you seem to surge forward and engulf you. For a brief moment, they render you invisible.*

When you initiate this maneuver, you turn invisible, as the *greater invisibility* spell (*PH* 245). You remain invisible until the end of your current turn.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## DANCE OF THE SPIDER

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Black, shadowy energy covers your hands and feet, allowing you to scuttle across the walls and ceiling like a lurking spider.*

While you are in this stance, you gain a benefit similar to the *spider climb* spell (PH 283). You gain a climb speed of 20 feet. You do not need to make a Climb check to traverse a vertical or horizontal surface, even if you attempt to move across a ceiling. You retain your Dexterity bonus to AC while climbing, and you must have at least one hand free to support yourself while you climb. You do not take any penalties, nor do your opponents gain any bonus when attacking you, while you climb. You cannot take a run action while climbing in this manner.

## DEATH IN THE DARK

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 7
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*You catch your foe unaware, allowing you to deal a single, deadly strike that slays her instantly.*

This maneuver functions only against a flat-footed opponent. As part of this maneuver, make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you deal normal damage and the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 17 + your Wis modifier). If the target fails this save, she takes an extra 15d6 points of damage.

If her save succeeds, she takes an extra 5d6 points of damage. This maneuver functions only against opponents who are vulnerable to critical hits.

### DRAIN VITALITY

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Prerequisite:** One Shadow Hand maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

*A faint nimbus of sickly gray shadow surrounds your weapon. When you attack, this shadowy aura flows into the wound you inflict, sapping your opponent's strength, vitality, and energy.*

As part of this maneuver, make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you deal normal melee damage and the target must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12 + your Wis modifier) or take 2 points of Constitution damage. A successful save negates the Constitution damage but not the normal melee damage.

### ENERVATING SHADOW STRIKE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

*Your weapon becomes cloaked in an inky, black nimbus. As you strike your opponent, that energy flows into the wound and leaves him pale, weak, and shaking.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, the target must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 18 + your Wis modifier) or gain 1d4 negative levels. You gain 5 temporary hit points for each negative level your enemy gains. Temporary hit points gained in this manner last until the end of the encounter. The effects of any negative levels bestowed by this strike disappear in 24 hours.

If the target has at least as many negative levels as Hit Dice, it dies. Each negative level gives a creature a –1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, and effective level (for determining the power, duration, DC, and other details of spells or special abilities). Additionally, a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from her highest available level. Negative levels stack.

In addition to the negative levels, your attack deals normal damage, even if the target succeeds on the saving throw.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### FIVE-SHADOW CREEPING ICE ENERVATION STRIKE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 9
**Prerequisite:** Five Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial; see text

*With a single lunge, you pierce your enemy to the core. A shadow of ultimate cold falls over his heart and begins to worm through his veins to the five points of his body.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If you hit, you deal normal melee damage plus an extra 15d6 points of damage, and a shadow spreads out from your enemy's heart, freezing the blood in his veins. Roll a d20 and refer to the information below to determine toward which point of his body the freezing shadow spreads. This effect functions even if your opponent is not humanoid; once you have struck your foe's heart, the shadow produces the same effects even in a creature with a different anatomy.

**Result of 1–7:** Spreads out to legs. Ability damage: 2d6 Dex. Special effect: Speed is reduced to 0 feet.

**Result of 8–14:** Spreads out to arms. Ability damage: 2d6 Str. Special effect: –6 penalty on attack rolls and Concentration checks.

**Result of 15–20:** Struck in the heart. Ability damage: 2d6 Dex, 2d6 Str. Special effect: 2d6 points of Constitution damage.

A foe struck by this attack must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 19 + your Wis modifier) to resist its effects. On a successful save, the target ignores any special effect from the attack and takes half the indicated ability damage (but still takes normal melee damage as well as the extra 15d6 points of damage). Each of the special effects lasts for 1d6 rounds.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### GHOST BLADE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Prerequisite:** Three Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*A smile brightens your foe's eyes; he has dodged your blow. But that was merely the ghost blade. The real blade is cutting swiftly from underneath, and yet he still smiles. . . .*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack. As you strike at your opponent, you create an illusory double of your weapon. This double slashes at your opponent, tricking him into mistaking it for your attack. In truth, the illusion cloaks your real attack. Your opponent is caught flat-footed against this strike, as the hidden attack from a new direction ruins his defenses.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### HAND OF DEATH

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Touch
**Target:** Creature touched
**Duration:** 1d3 rounds
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

*You reach out and tap your foe with a single finger. Her look of puzzlement turns to fear as black energy spreads across her body, rendering her helpless.*

You draw upon the power of shadow to render a single foe helpless. By touching a specific nerve center and channeling your *ki*, you leave your enemy's muscles cold, locked, and useless.

This maneuver functions only against flat-footed opponents. As part of this maneuver, you make a melee touch attack against your opponent. If this attack hits, your opponent must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 14 + your Wis modifier) or be paralyzed for 1d3 rounds.

## ISLAND OF BLADES

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You cloak yourself in a swirling nimbus of shadow energy. These shadows spin and flow around you, preventing any creature near you from being able to anticipate your attacks.*

Your turn your enemies' strengths against them, improving your combat ability as well as that of an ally. When you and a comrade move to attack an opponent, you time your attacks and position yourself to frustrate your opponent's defenses.

If both you and an ally are adjacent to the same creature, the two of you gain the benefit for flanking that opponent. You can gain this benefit against multiple opponents at the same time, as can your allies. If both you and an ally are adjacent to the same two creatures, the two of you gain the benefit of flanking against both creatures.

## OBSCURING SHADOW VEIL

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*As you strike your opponent, you summon the fell energies of the Shadow Hand school to rob your foe of her sight. Inky, black energy burrows into her eyes, rendering her blind for a few critical moments.*

As a standard action, you can make a single melee attack. If it hits, your opponent takes normal melee damage plus an extra 5d6 points of damage. She must also make a successful Fortitude save (DC 14 + your Wis modifier) or suffer a 50% miss chance on all melee and ranged attacks for 1 round. A successful save negates the miss chance, but not the extra damage.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## ONE WITH SHADOW

Shadow Hand (Counter)
**Level:** Swordsage 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 immediate action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** See text

*You fade into the raw essence of shadow, turning transparent, then insubstantial.*

As an immediate action, you become incorporeal. You gain all the benefits of the incorporeal subtype, along with the drawbacks, as outlined in the Incorporeal Subtype sidebar. All of your gear becomes incorporeal, although you cannot grant this state to a living creature that you touch or carry. You remain incorporeal until the beginning of your next turn.

## SHADOW BLADE TECHNIQUE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You weave your weapon in an elaborate pattern, creating an illusory double that glows with white energy. As you make your attack, both your true weapon and the illusion slash at your foe.*

This maneuver allows you to create a mystical double of your weapon. As you attack, your foe must decide which weapon to defend against. In most cases, the illusory weapon distracts your foe and allows your true attack to hit. In some cases, both attacks strike home. In this case, the shadow blade discharges its magic and imbues your attack with cold energy.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack against an opponent. Unlike on a normal attack, you roll 2d20 and select which of the two die results to use. If you use the higher die result, resolve your attack as normal. (Your mystic double misses, but your true attack might hit.) If you use the lower die result, or if both die results are the same, your attack deals an extra 1d6 points of cold damage as both the mystic double's attack and your true weapon strike home.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## SHADOW BLINK

Shadow Hand [Teleportation]
**Level:** Swordsage 7
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 50 ft.
**Target:** You

*In the blink of an eye, you disappear and emerge from a mote of shadow energy across the battlefield.*

This maneuver functions as the shadow jaunt maneuver, except that it can be initiated as a swift action.

## SHADOW GARROTE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Target:** One living creature
**Duration:** See text
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*With a subtle gesture, you carve a slice of shadow from the air around you and cast it toward your foe. It wraps around the creature's neck and squeezes the life from it.*

As part of this maneuver, you create a strand of shadow that you hurl at an opponent. The strand wraps around the target's throat and chokes it. As part of this maneuver, you make a ranged touch attack against a creature within range. If your attack is successful, your opponent takes 5d6 points of damage. In addition, it must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 13 + your Wis modifier) or become flat-footed until the start of its next turn. This strike has no effect against nonliving creatures, such as constructs and undead.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

### SHADOW JAUNT

Shadow Hand [Teleportation]
**Level:** Swordsage 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 50 ft.
**Target:** You

*A cloud of shadow energy engulfs you, spins into a tiny mote, and disappears. A moment later, this shadowy cloud appears across the battlefield and expels you from it.*

As part of this maneuver, you disappear in a cloud of darkness and teleport up to 50 feet away. You must have line of sight and line of effect to your destination. If you attempt to use this maneuver to move into an occupied space, you do not move, and the maneuver is expended but has no effect.

### SHADOW NOOSE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Target:** One flat-footed living creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*As you foe struggles to ready his defenses, you make a subtle gesture in the air. A noose formed of shadow drops from above him, wraps around his throat, and hoists him aloft. His limbs flail as he struggles to free himself from the strangling noose.*

As part of this maneuver, you form a noose of shadow that wraps around your target and strangles him. This maneuver works only against a flat-footed target. As part of this maneuver, you make a ranged touch attack against a flat-footed creature within range. If it hits, your opponent takes 8d6 points of damage. In addition, he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 16 + your Wis modifier) or be stunned for 1 round. A successful save negates the stun, but not the extra damage. This strike has no effect against nonliving creatures, such as constructs and undead.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.

## INCORPOREAL SUBTYPE

The incorporeal subtype was updated in *Monster Manual III* for clarity. Reference this version of the subtype when you use the one with shadow maneuver.

**Incorporeal Subtype:** Some creatures are incorporeal by nature, while others (such as those that become ghosts) can acquire the incorporeal subtype. An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells, including touch spells, or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with ghost touch weapons). Nondamaging spell effects affect incorporeal creatures normally unless they require corporeal targets to function (such as *implosion*) or they create a corporeal effect that incorporeal creatures would normally be unaffected by (such as a *web* or *wall of stone* spell). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.

An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it. Nonmagical attacks made by an incorporeal creature with a melee weapon have no effect on corporeal targets, and any melee attack an incorporeal creature makes with a magic weapon against a corporeal target has a 50% miss chance, except for attacks it makes with a ghost touch weapon, which are made normally (no miss chance).

Any equipment worn or carried by an incorporeal creature is also incorporeal as long as it remains in the creature's possession. An object that the creature relinquishes loses its incorporeal quality (and the creature loses the ability to manipulate the object). If an incorporeal creature uses a thrown weapon or a ranged weapon, the projectile becomes corporeal as soon as it is fired and can affect a corporeal target normally (no miss chance). Magic items possessed by an incorporeal creature work normally with respect to their effects on the creature or on another target. Similarly, spells cast by an incorporeal creature affect corporeal creatures normally.

An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).

An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air. Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage. Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions. Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.

An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures. Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

### SHADOW STRIDE

Shadow Hand [Teleportation]
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Initiation Action:** 1 move action
**Range:** 50 ft.
**Target:** You

*You dissipate into a puff of black shadow. A moment later, the shadow coalesces, and you appear fifty feet away.*

This maneuver functions as the shadow jaunt maneuver, except that it can be initiated as a move action.

### STALKER IN THE NIGHT

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You slide through the dark like a bird of prey, emerging only to strike down your foe before sliding back into shadow's welcoming embrace.*

As part of this maneuver, you move up to your speed and make a single melee attack at any point during your movement. If you were hidden before initiating this maneuver, you can keep the results of your previous Hide and Move Silently checks even though you move and attack. As long as you end your turn in a spot that allows you to hide, your foes must make Spot and Listen checks as normal to discern your presence. Your movement and this maneuver's attack have no effect on your Hide and Move Silently results.

### STEP OF THE DANCING MOTH

Shadow Hand (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Shadow Hand maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You focus your inner reserve of ki energy to generate flowing shadows that lift you off the ground. You walk across the roughest ground, even water, with ease.*

While you are in this stance, you can walk up to 5 feet above the ground. Your speed becomes 20 feet while you are in this stance, and you cannot run. You ignore any terrain feature that fails to project more than 5 feet above the ground, such as difficult terrain, burning lava, water, and so forth. In addition, you ignore the standard penalties on Hide and Move Silently checks for moving quickly.

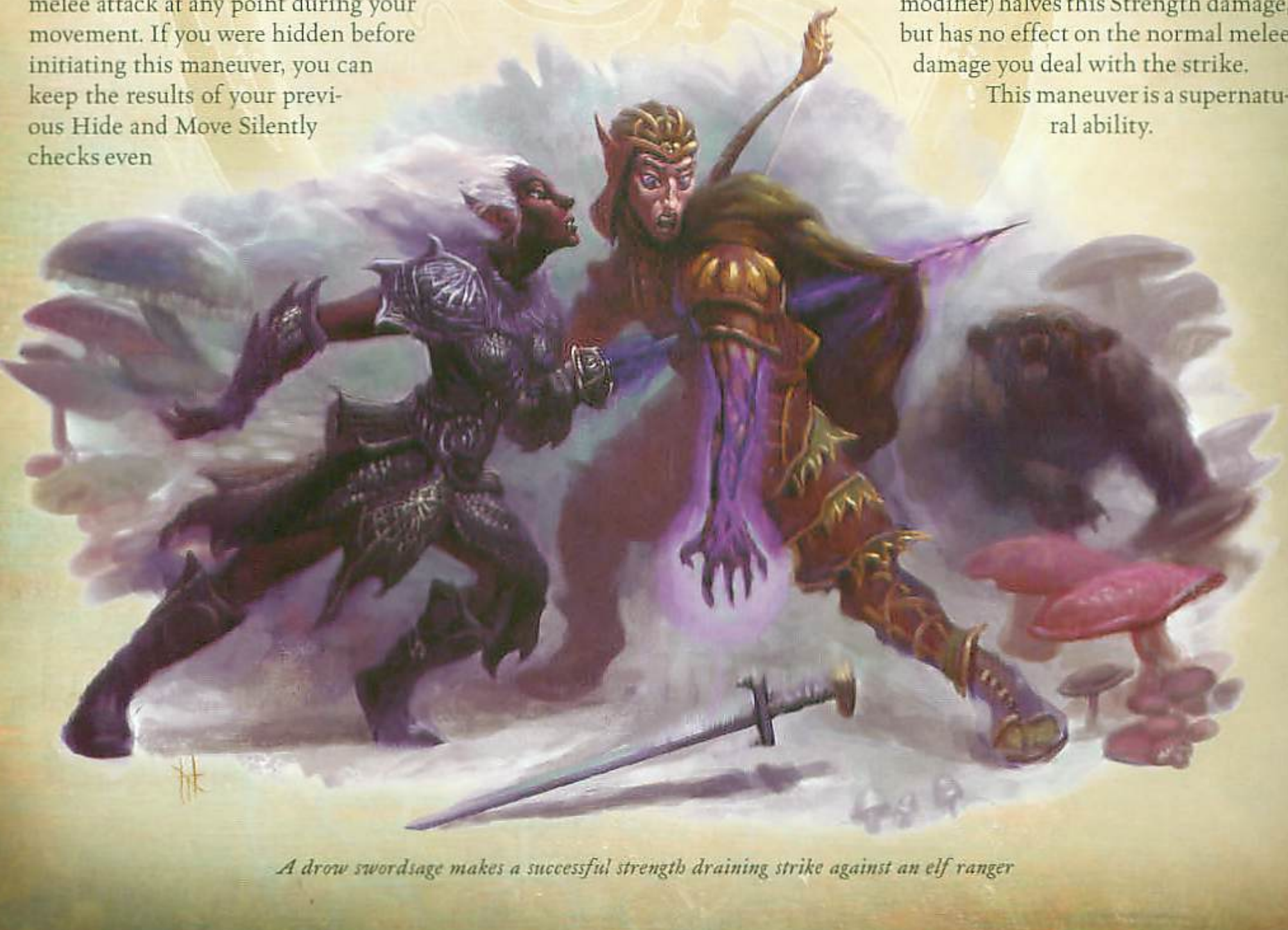
### STRENGTH DRAINING STRIKE

Shadow Hand (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3
**Prerequisite:** One Shadow Hand maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half

*Liquid, black energy covers your weapon. As you strike your opponent, this material flows into the wound, spreads along his veins, and leaves him weakened.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack against an opponent. In addition to dealing normal melee damage with the attack, you deal 4 points of Strength damage. A successful Fortitude save (DC 13 + your Wis modifier) halves this Strength damage, but has no effect on the normal melee damage you deal with the strike.

This maneuver is a supernatural ability.



*A drow swordsage makes a successful strength draining strike against an elf ranger*

Illus. by T. Nordstrand

## STONE DRAGON

The Stone Dragon discipline focuses on strength, power, and toughness. Its teachings grant a martial adept the ability to splinter steel with a single, focused blow. Stone Dragon's defensive abilities focus on tapping into the enduring power of stone to turn aside attacks. This discipline's favored weapons are the greatsword, greataxe, heavy mace, and unarmed strike. Its key skill is Balance.

Unlike with other disciplines, adepts of this school rely on an external force—the power of the earth and stone—to help power their maneuvers. As a result, Stone Dragon maneuvers can be initiated only if you are in contact with the ground.

### ADAMANTINE BONES

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 8, swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** 1 round

*You are an impenetrable tower of defiance on the battlefield. Attacking you is as fruitless as striking a mountain with a walking stick.*

The supreme focus, mental toughness, and physical durability taught by the Stone Dragon discipline culminate in this powerful combat maneuver. When you make a successful attack, your mind focuses your body into the equivalent of a living shard of rock. Even the most ferocious attacks bounce off you without harm.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you gain damage reduction 20/adamantine for 1 round.

### ANCIENT MOUNTAIN HAMMER

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 7, swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature or unattended object

*You put the weight of a great mountain behind your attack, pounding through armor and bone.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. This attack deals an extra 12d6 points of damage and automatically overcomes damage reduction and hardness.

### BONESPLITTING STRIKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 4, swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your attack slams home with a ferocious crack of shattered bones and pulped flesh. Your target reels backward, still alive but severely crippled.*

A Stone Dragon adept is an implacable foe. Your attacks smash through armor and turn bone into dust. By focusing your strength into a single, devastating attack, you smash an opponent to the core. His very health and endurance are left wrecked by your attack.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If your attack hits, the target takes normal damage as well as 2 points of Constitution damage.

### BONECRUSHER

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 3, swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** See text
**Save:** Fortitude partial; see text

*You deliver your attack, and your enemy's eyes jerk wide open in panic as his skeleton begins to fracture in hundreds of places.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack. If your attack hits, it deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. The creature struck must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 13 + your Str modifier) or its skeletal structure becomes massively weakened, and all rolls made to confirm a critical hit against the target gain a +10 bonus. A successful save does not negate the extra damage.

This effect lasts until the target's hit points are restored to their full normal total, whether by magical or normal healing.

Creatures without a discernible anatomy or that are immune to critical hits are immune to this maneuver's special effect. The extra damage still applies against such targets.

### BOULDER ROLL

Stone Dragon (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 4, swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*Like a boulder tumbling down a mountainside, you slam through your enemies.*

You are an implacable foe once you gain enough momentum. As you move across the battlefield, your foes must stand aside or be crushed beneath your feet.

If you make an overrun attack (PH 157), you can initiate this boost. You gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check made to overrun, and if you fail your check, your target can't knock you prone. You simply stop moving in the last legal space you occupied. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for the movement or the overrun attempts.

### CHARGING MINOTAUR

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1, swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You charge at your foe, blasting him with such power that he stumbles back.*

As you roar across the battlefield, your position yourself to deliver a devastating charge attack. When you slam into an opponent, you crush him with concussive force and send him stumbling backward.

As part of this maneuver, you make a bull rush attack (PH 154) as part of a charge. Neither the movement nor the bull rush attack provokes attacks of opportunity. Resolve the bull rush attempt normally. If your Strength check exceeds the opponent's result, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 2d6 + your Str modifier in addition to pushing the target back as normal. Assuming your Strength check is high enough, you can push your target back more than 5 feet (as normal for a bull rush, but without having to follow).

## COLOSSUS STRIKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 7, swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Focusing your strength with a deep, rumbling shout, you execute an attack that sends your opponent flying through the air.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against your foe. This attack deals an extra 6d6 points of damage, and the creature struck must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17 + your Str modifier) or be hurled 1d4 squares away from you, falling prone in that square. A creature of a smaller size category than yours gets a –2 penalty on this save; a creature of a larger size category than yours gets a +2 bonus on the save. The enemy's movement doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity. If an obstacle blocks the creature's movement, it instead stops in the first unoccupied square.

## CRUSHING VISE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 6, swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*The overwhelming power behind your attack leaves your opponent unable to move. The punishing strike forces it to waste a few moments shrugging off the effects of your attack.*

By making a powerful, focused blow, you leave your opponent unable to move. The crushing weight of your attack forces it to waste a precious moment regaining its footing.

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack. This attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. If the creature you hit is standing on the ground, your attack also drops the target's speed to 0 feet (for all movement types) for 1 round. It can act normally in all other ways.

This maneuver functions only against opponents standing on the ground. A flying creature or a levitating target is immune to the speed reducing effect, but not to the extra damage.

## CRUSHING WEIGHT OF THE MOUNTAIN

Stone Dragon (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 3, swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Stone Dragon maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You crush your opponent beneath you, squeezing the life out of him as you pin him to the ground.*

Engaging in close combat against you is, at best, a foolish prospect. Drawing on your understanding of the Stone Dragon discipline, you squeeze a foe within your grasp and force the life from him.

While you are in this stance, you gain the ability to constrict for 2d6 points of damage + 1-1/2 times your Str bonus (if any). You can constrict an opponent that you grapple by making a successful grapple check.

## EARTHSTRIKE QUAKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 8, swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 20 ft.
**Area:** 20-ft.-radius burst, centered on you
**Duration:** Instantaneous
**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates

*You swing your weapon in a wild arc, slamming it into the ground at your feet. Energy surges out from you, causing the ground to shudder with a sharp tremor.*

You channel *ki* into the earth with your mighty strike, causing the ground to rumble and shake briefly. Anyone standing on the ground in this maneuver's area must make a successful Reflex save (DC 18 + your Str modifier) or be knocked prone. Any creature standing on the ground in this area that is currently casting a spell must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level) or lose the spell.

You are immune to the effect of the earthstrike quake maneuver. Your allies must still save as normal against its effect.

Walls and similar barriers don't block the line of effect of an earthstrike quake.

## ELDER MOUNTAIN HAMMER

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 5, swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature or unattended object

*You draw strength from the earth beneath your feet and transfer it into ruinous power. Your next attack drops like an avalanche upon your foe, hammering him into submission.*

The students of the Stone Dragon discipline learn to tap into the power of the earth, channel its endless strength, and use it to grant their attacks tremendous force. A strike delivered by a Stone Dragon adept can shatter a warrior's shield, turn a wooden door into splinters, or slay an ogre with a single blow.

When you use this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. That attack deals an extra 6d6 points of damage and automatically overcomes damage reduction and hardness.

### GIANT'S STANCE

Stone Dragon (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 5, swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You swing your weapon in a wide, deadly arc that slams into your foe with incredible force. Only your mastery of the Stone Dragon techniques allows you to make such reckless blows without losing your footing.*

Tapping into the power of the Stone Dragon, you strike with resolute, irresistible force. You learn to set the full weight of your body into each of your attacks. A warrior with less skill would lose his balance and fall to the ground when using this fighting style.

While you are in this stance, you deal damage as if you were one size larger than normal, to a maximum of Large. This benefit improves your weapon and unarmed strike damage. It does not confer any of the other benefits or drawbacks of a change in size, such as a modifier to ability scores or AC, or an improved reach.

This stance immediately ends if you move more than 5 feet for any reason, such as from a bull rush attack, a *telekinesis* spell, and so forth.

### IRON BONES

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 6, swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers

*A mummy feels the terrible might of the elder mountain hammer*

Illus. by M. Phillipi

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** 1 round

*As you make a successful attack, you enter a meditative state that leaves you almost invulnerable to harm. For a few brief moments, arrows bounce off your skin, and sword blows barely draw any blood.*

This maneuver is an evolution of the techniques and abilities covered by the stone bones maneuver. Your meditative focus, *ki*, and training allow your mind to overcome matter. Weapons bounce from you skin and barely injure you.

When you use this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you gain damage reduction 10/adamantine for 1 round.

### IRRESISTIBLE MOUNTAIN STRIKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 6, swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*You slam your weapon into your foe with irresistible force. He can barely move as he struggles to marshal his defenses against you.*

Your mighty attack causes your opponent to stagger aimlessly for a few key moments, leaving him unable to act fully on his next turn.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. This attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage. A creature hit by this strike must also make a successful Fortitude save (DC 16 + your Str modifier) or be unable to take a standard action for 1 round. It can otherwise act as normal. A creature that successfully saves still takes the extra damage.

This maneuver functions only against opponents standing on the ground. A flying creature or a levitating target need not save against the action loss effect, but still takes the extra damage.

### MOUNTAIN AVALANCHE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 5, swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Stone Dragon maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Saving Throw:** Reflex half; see text

*You wade through your enemies like a stone giant rampaging through a mob of orcs. You crush them underfoot and drive them before you, leaving a trail of the dead in your wake.*

As part of this maneuver, you can move up to double your speed and trample your opponents. You can enter the space of any creature of your size category or smaller. If you enter and occupy all of the space occupied by such a creature, it takes damage equal to 2d6 + 1-1/2 times your Str bonus (if any).

You can deal trampling damage to a creature only once per round, no matter how many times you move into or through its space. You must move into every square a creature occupies to trample it. If you move over only part of the space a creature occupies (for example, you are a Large creature moving over half the space of a Large opponent), it can either attempt an attack of opportunity against you or it can attempt a Reflex save (DC 15 + your Str modifier) to avoid half of your trampling damage.

### MOUNTAIN HAMMER

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 2, swordsage 2, warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature or unattended object

*Like a falling avalanche, you strike with the weight and fury of the mountain.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. This attack deals an extra 2d6 points of damage and automatically overcomes damage reduction and hardness.

### MOUNTAIN TOMBSTONE STRIKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 9, swordsage 9, warblade 9
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You slam into your foe, turning bones into dust and muscle into bloody pulp. Your foe's body is left a crippled, twisted mockery.*

Your attack causes damage to the structure of your foe's body. As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you deal 2d6 points of Constitution damage in addition to your normal damage.

### OVERWHELMING MOUNTAIN STRIKE

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 4, swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Your mighty strike temporarily disorients your opponent, costing him precious seconds as he shakes off the attack.*

You slam your foe with a mighty strike, almost knocking him from his feet and forcing him to find his footing and steady himself before he can react.

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack. This attack deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. If the creature you hit is standing on the ground, your attack also causes the target to lose its ability to take a move action for 1 round. It can otherwise act normally. A successful Fortitude save (DC 14 + your Str modifier) by the creature struck negates the loss of its move action, but not the extra damage.

This maneuver functions only against opponents standing on the ground. A flying creature or a levitating target need not save against the action loss effect, but still takes the extra damage.

### ROOTS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Stone Dragon (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 3, swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You crouch and set your feet flat on the ground, rooting yourself to the spot you stand. Nothing can move you from this place.*

Like a living mountain, you choose your position on the battlefield and sink your roots into the earth. With your spot chosen on the field, you cannot be shifted from your position.

While you are in this stance, you gain a +10 bonus on checks to resist bull rush, overrun, and trip attacks, as well as on grapple checks made to resist an opponent's grapple attempt. Any creature that attempts to move through your threatened area or the space you occupy takes a –10 penalty on any Tumble checks it makes. This stance also grants you damage reduction 2/—.

This stance immediately ends if you move more than 5 feet for any reason, such as from a bull rush attack, a *telekinesis* spell, and so forth.

### STONE BONES

Stone Dragon (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1, swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** 1 round

*You focus your energy to enhance your defenses, drawing on the power of your weapon's impact with a foe to toughen yourself against a counterattack.*

The Stone Dragon tradition teaches its disciples to shrug off attacks through a combination of mental focus, pure toughness, and resilience. When you make a successful melee attack, you attune your mind and body to such an incredible extent that only the sharpest weapons can injure you. Lesser armaments cause mere bruises and minor cuts.

When you use this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, you gain damage reduction 5/adamantine for 1 round.

## STONE DRAGON'S FURY

Stone Dragon (Strike)

**Level:** Crusader 3, swordsage 3, warblade 3

**Prerequisite:** One Stone Dragon maneuver

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Melee attack

**Target:** Creature or object struck

*With a mighty war cry, you slam your weapon into a slight crack or other fault in an object. The object shudders for a moment before it collapses into broken shards.*

Your attunement to Stone Dragon's earth nature allows you to spot flaws in objects with uncanny precision. You use this knowledge to your advantage, allowing you to make devastating attacks against objects and constructs.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If your attack hits a construct or an object, you deal an extra 4d6 points of damage. You can use this strike in conjunction with the sunder special attack (*PH* 158) and attempt to damage held or carried objects. Against other targets, you gain no special benefit from this maneuver.

## STONE VISE

Stone Dragon (Strike)

**Level:** Crusader 2, swordsage 2, warblade 2

**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Melee attack

**Target:** Creature struck

**Duration:** 1 round

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*You make a crushing blow that staggers your opponent, leaving it unable to move.*

By making a powerful, focused blow, you leave your opponent unable to move. The crushing weight of your blow forces it to waste a precious moment regaining its footing.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. This attack deals an extra 1d6 points of damage. If the creature hit is standing on the ground, your attack also drops the target's speed to 0 feet (for all movement capabilities) for 1 round. It can otherwise act normally. A successful Fortitude save (DC 12 + your Str modifier) by the creature struck negates the immobilization, but not the extra damage.

This maneuver functions only against opponents standing on the ground. A flying creature or a levitating target need not save against the speed reduction effect, but still takes the extra damage.

## STONEFOOT STANCE

Stone Dragon (Stance)

**Level:** Crusader 1, swordsage 1, warblade 1

**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** Stance

*You crouch and set your feet flat on the ground, drawing the resilience of the earth into your body.*

The students of the Stone Dragon discipline model their defenses after the earth itself. The wind might batter the mountain, the river might cut through the plains, but in the end the stone and rock shrug off such assaults.

While you are in this stance, you gain a +2 bonus on Strength checks and a +2 bonus to AC against creatures of a size category larger than yours.

This stance immediately ends if you move more than 5 feet for any reason, such as from a bull rush attack, a *telekinesis* spell, and so forth.

## STRENGTH OF STONE

Stone Dragon (Stance)

**Level:** Crusader 8, swordsage 8, warblade 8

**Prerequisite:** Three Stone Dragon maneuvers

**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** Stance

*You enter an impenetrable defensive stance, making it almost impossible for an attack to strike you in a vulnerable area.*

While you are in this stance, you focus your efforts on preventing any devastating attacks from penetrating your defenses. You are immune to critical hits while you are in this stance.

This stance immediately ends if you move more than 5 feet for any reason, such as from a bull rush attack, a *telekinesis* spell, and so forth.

*A dwarf crusader gains the strength of stone*

*Illus. by B. Trott*

# TIGER CLAW

The Tiger Claw discipline embraces a feral rage that lurks within the heart of its initiates. In battle, such warriors growl like wild animals, attack with a fury similar to that of a barbarian, and rely on overwhelming, vicious assaults to defeat their enemies. The Tiger Claw discipline's favored weapons are the kukri, kama, handaxe, claw, greataxe, and unarmed strike. Its key skill is Jump.

## BLOOD IN THE WATER

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*The smell of blood drives you into a fury. As you slash into your foe, each fresh wound you inflict spurs you onward.*

While you are in this stance, you whip yourself into a terrible rage. When you score a critical hit against an opponent, you enter a near frenzied state from the sight and smell of blood. You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls. Because this is an untyped bonus, it stacks with each successful critical hit you score.

If you go more than 1 minute without achieving a critical hit, you no longer gain the benefit of the stance.

## CLAW AT THE MOON

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2, warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You leap into the air, catching your foe off guard as you slice down into him.*

You learn to leap into the air and slice at a foe's vulnerable points. Like a great cat, you spring into the air and attack your foe from an unexpected direction.

As part of this maneuver, you attempt a Jump check to leap into the air and make a melee attack that targets your foe's upper body, face, and neck. The Jump check's DC is equal to your target's AC. If this check succeeds, your attack deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. If this attack threatens a critical hit, you gain a +4 bonus on your roll to confirm the critical hit.

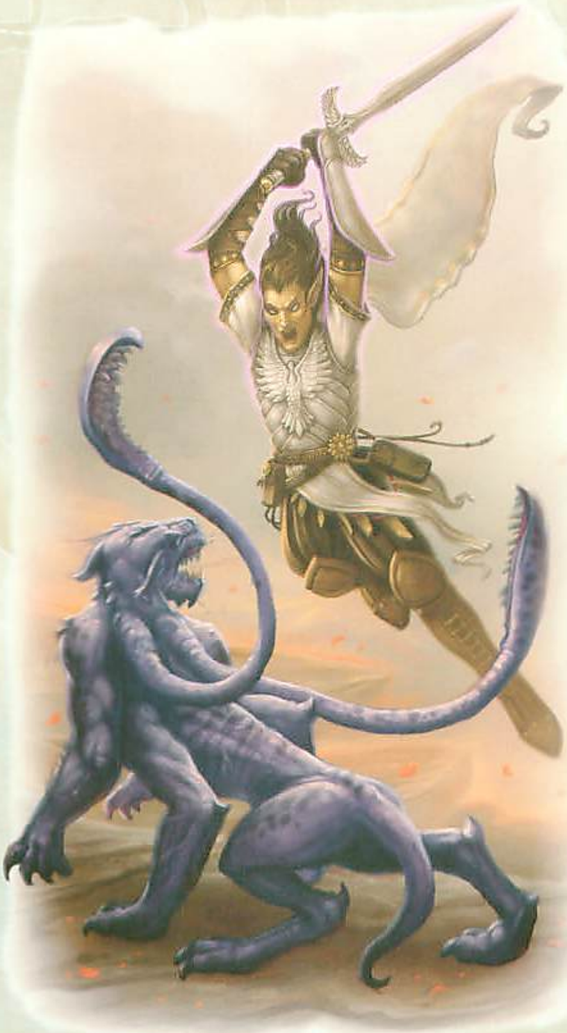
If your check fails, you can still attack, but you do not deal extra damage or gain a bonus on a roll to confirm a critical hit. The maneuver is still considered expended.

## DANCING MONGOOSE

Tiger Claw (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*You swing your weapons about you in a blur of speed, making a series of devastating attacks in the space of a single breath.*

You make a flurry of deadly attacks. After initiating this boost, you can make one additional attack with each weapon you wield (to a maximum of two extra attacks if you wield two or more weapons). These extra attacks are made at your highest attack bonus for each of your respective weapons. All of these attacks must be directed against the same opponent.



*A warblade makes a death from above attack against a displacer beast*

Illus. by H. Lyon

## DEATH FROM ABOVE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*With a war cry, you leap into the air and lift your weapon high overhead. As you arc downward, your weight and momentum lend bone-crushing force to your attack.*

Like a thunderbolt, you slam into your foe from above. You leap upon your enemy and drive him into the ground. The impact of your attack gives you extra force, allowing you to score a deadly hit.

To use this maneuver, you must be adjacent to a foe. As part of this maneuver, you attempt a DC 20 Jump check. If this check succeeds, you can make a single melee attack against an opponent that you were adjacent to when you began this maneuver. This attack occurs in the air as you soar over your opponent, also as part of the maneuver.

Your attack deals an extra 4d6 points of damage, and your opponent is considered flat-footed against this attack. You then land in any square adjacent to the target of this attack, though no more than 20 feet away from your starting position.

If your Jump check fails, you remain in the last square you occupied before the Jump check and can make a single attack normally. The maneuver is still considered expended.

### FERAL DEATH BLOW

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 9, warblade 9
**Prerequisite:** Four Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*With a primal howl, you leap into the air and land on your opponent, hacking and clawing at his neck.*

You leap upon your opponent, rending and tearing with your weapons in an attempt to kill him with a brutally overwhelming assault. You grab onto your foe as you slash and hack at his neck, face, and other vulnerable areas.

To use this maneuver, you must be adjacent to your intended target. As part of this maneuver, make a Jump check with a DC equal to your opponent's AC. If the check succeeds, you can then make a single melee attack against your foe, also as part of this maneuver. The target is considered flat-footed against this attack. If your attack deals damage, your target must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 19 + your Str modifier). If this save fails, your target is instantly slain (his hit points drop to –10). If the save is successful, you deal an extra 20d6 points of damage to the target in addition to your normal weapon damage. Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to the death effect of this strike.

If your Jump check fails, you can make a single attack normally. The maneuver is still considered expended.

### FLESH RIPPER

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round or more; see text
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

*With a mixture of careful precision and animal savagery, you tear into a foe to produce jagged wounds that overwhelm him with pain.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against a single opponent. If this attack hits, the target must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 13 + your Str modifier) or take a –4 penalty on attacks and to AC for 1 round. If your attack is a critical hit, these penalties last for a number of rounds equal to your weapon's critical multiplier. Your target takes normal damage from your attack regardless of the result of the save.

This maneuver functions only against creatures that are vulnerable to critical hits.

### FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD

Tiger Claw (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 30 ft.
**Area:** 30-ft.-radius burst centered on you
**Duration:** 1 minute
**Saving Throw:** Will partial; see text

*As your foe dies on your blade, you twist and turn your weapon to send blood spraying across the battlefield. Your enemies shriek in fear at their ally's grisly demise.*

If you reduce a living opponent to –1 or fewer hit points during your turn, you can initiate this maneuver. Your weapon rips into your foe as she drops, dealing an extra 1d6 points of damage and forcing all your enemies within a 30-foot radius to make successful Will saves (DC 14 + your Str modifier) or be shaken for 1 minute. The foe you drop must be within your threatened area when you initiate this maneuver. For each foe you drop during your turn prior to initiating this maneuver, the save DC increases by 1.

### GIRALLON WINDMILL FLESH RIP

Tiger Claw (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One or more creatures
**Duration:** End of turn

*Windmilling your arms in a furious blur, you strike your perplexed enemy from two directions at once, rending his flesh with each strike.*

Each of your attacks is precisely timed to maximize the carnage it inflicts. You must be wielding two or more weapons to initiate this maneuver. As you hack into your opponent, you use your weapons together to murderous effect. With a cruel twist of your blade, you widen the wounds you cause with each successive strike.

You must initiate this maneuver before making any attacks in the current round. If you strike an opponent multiple times during your turn, you also deal rend damage. This damage is based on the number of times you strike your opponent during your turn (see the table below). Determine the rend damage dealt immediately after you make your last attack for your turn.

If you attack multiple opponents during your turn, you gain this extra damage against each of them. A creature takes rend damage based on the number of attacks that hit it, not the number of successful attacks you make. For example, if you hit a fire giant three times and an evil cleric twice during your turn, the fire giant takes rend damage for three attacks and the cleric takes rend damage for two attacks.

| Successful Attacks | Rend Damage |
|---|---|
| 2 | 8d6 |
| 3 | 10d6 |
| 4 | 12d6 |
| 5 | 14d6 |
| 6 | 16d6 |
| 7 | 18d6 |
| 8+ | 20d6 |

## HAMSTRING ATTACK

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude half
**Duration:** 1 minute

*You slice into your opponent's legs, leaving him hobbled and stumbling about.*

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If this attack hits, it deals damage as normal. In addition, the target takes 1d8 points of Dexterity damage and a –10-foot penalty to speed for 1 minute. A successful Fortitude save (DC 17 + your Str modifier) halves both the Dexterity damage and the speed penalty.

## HUNTER'S SENSE

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You sniff at the air like a hunting animal. After you focus your mind, an array of scents that normally eludes your awareness become clear to you.*

Your mastery of the Tiger Claw discipline allows you to become attuned to the feral side of your personality. On a fundamental level, you begin to think more like a wild beast and less like a civilized creature. Your enemies are prey to be hunted down and slain. Your allies are packmates. This shift in view spreads to your physical senses.

As long as you are in this stance, you gain the scent special ability (*MM* 314).

## LEAPING DRAGON STANCE

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Even when you are trapped in tight quarters and seemingly unable to move, a leap can send you flying gracefully through the air.*

The Tiger Claw discipline teaches you to assume a stance that allows you to sail through the air when jumping. You spring from the ground with an unmatched burst of speed and strength.

While you are in this stance, you gain a +10-foot enhancement bonus on Jump checks. In addition, any jumps you make while in this stance are considered running jumps.

## POUNCING CHARGE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You

*With the roar of a wild beast, you throw yourself into the fray. Your weapons are little more than a blur as you hack at your foe with feral speed.*

With a ferocious howl, you throw yourself into combat. You move with such speed and ferocity that when you reach your enemy, you unleash a blistering flurry of slashes, cuts, and hacks.

As part of initiating this maneuver, you make a charge attack. Instead of making a single attack at the end of your charge, you can make a full attack. The bonus on your attack roll for making a charge attack applies to all your attack rolls.

## PREY ON THE WEAK

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You scythe through weaker foes like a mighty predator turned loose among a herd of prey.*

With each foe you strike, your bloodlust and battle fury rises ever higher. After a brief moment of explosive rage, the foes around you are left bloodied, torn, and moaning.

Whenever an opponent within 10 feet of you drops to –1 or fewer hit points, whether from your attack, an ally's strike, or some other cause, you can immediately make an attack of opportunity against any opponent within your threatened area.

## RABID BEAR STRIKE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*With a ferocious roar, you leap upon your enemy like a wild beast, slamming your weapon into her with a madman's fury.*

You focus your primal fury into a single attack, laying an opponent low with a mighty blow that splinters bones and shatters steel. As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. You gain a +4 bonus on this attack roll and deal an extra 10d6 points of damage. After completing this maneuver, you take a –4 penalty to AC until the start of your next turn.

## RABID WOLF STRIKE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 2, warblade 2
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You foam at the mouth and scream in rage as you make a powerful attack against your enemy. You set aside all thoughts of defense as you lunge forward.*

For a split-second, you unleash the barely controlled, primal rage that surges within you. As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. You gain a +4 bonus on this attack roll and deal an extra 2d6 points of damage. You take a –4 penalty to AC until the start of your next turn, as this wild strike sends you off balance and hinders your defenses.

## RAGING MONGOOSE

Tiger Claw (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** End of turn

*You unleash a ferocious volley of attacks, setting aside all thoughts of caution and self-control.*

You make a flurry of deadly attacks. After initiating this boost, you can make two additional attacks with each weapon you wield (to a maximum of four extra attacks if you wield two or more weapons). These extra attacks are made at your highest attack bonus for each of your respective weapons. You can spread these attacks out among as many foes as you wish.

## SOARING RAPTOR STRIKE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You leap into the air, catching a larger opponent by surprise as you jump over its defenses to plunge your weapon into the crown of its head.*

With a carefully timed leap, you jump over the target's defenses and attack it from an unexpected angle. You can use this maneuver only against a foe of a larger size category than yours. As part of this maneuver, you make a Jump check with a DC equal to your foe's AC. If this check succeeds, you also make a melee attack as part of this maneuver. If the check fails, you cannot make this attack and the maneuver is still considered expended. You gain a +4 bonus on the attack roll and deal an extra 6d6 points of damage if your attack hits.

## SUDDEN LEAP

Tiger Claw (Boost)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Instantaneous

*You leap to a new position in the blink of an eye, leaving your opponents baffled.*

*A githyanki warblade infuriates a monstrous spider with the swooping dragon strike maneuver*

Illus. by T. Nordstrand

You can make a Jump check as a swift action and move the distance determined by your check result. You provoke attacks of opportunity with this movement, and you must move in a straight line. As with any movement, you can attempt a Tumble check to avoid any attacks you provoke with this sudden leap. You can't move through enemies, unless you succeed on the appropriate Tumble check.

## SWOOPING DRAGON STRIKE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

*Like a dragon, you swoop down upon your foe and let loose with a devastating attack. You leap over her and, as you soar through the air, unleash a devastating volley of attacks.*

You leap over an opponent and chop down at her, ruining her defenses and striking with a critical blow.

As part of this maneuver, you attempt a Jump check to leap over your target. The result of this Jump check must be sufficient to allow you to move through an opponent's space and over her. If you fail the Jump check needed to jump over your foe, you provoke attacks of opportunity for the distance you jump, if applicable. If your jump was too short to clear your opponent but far enough that you would land in a space she occupies, you land adjacent to your opponent in the square closest to your starting square.

If your check is insufficient to jump over your target, you can also make a single attack against your foe with no special benefits or penalties, as long as your target is within reach.

If the check succeeds, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity for leaving threatened squares during your jump. Your foe loses her Dexterity bonus to AC against your melee attack. This attack deals an extra 10d6 points of damage, and the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC equal to your Jump check result) or be stunned for 1 round.

## WOLF CLIMBS THE MOUNTAIN

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 6, warblade 6

**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You slip between a larger foe's legs and strike its exposed side. You then find cover in the shadow of your enemy's bulk.*

You can use this maneuver only against an opponent of a size category larger than yours. As part of this maneuver, you enter your target's square without provoking an attack of opportunity. You can then attack your target as part of this maneuver. Your attack deals an extra 5d6 points of damage. You remain within your opponent's space after you complete this maneuver. You gain cover against all attacks as long as you remain in his space, including those made by the target. If the target moves, it leaves you behind but provokes an attack of opportunity from you for leaving your space.

### WOLF FANG STRIKE

Tiger Claw (Strike)
**Level:** Swordsage 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You lash out in a blur of movement with two weapons, hacking into your foe with a combination of feral strength and speed.*

You tap into the speed and strength embodied within your feral spirit. You must fight with two weapons to use this maneuver. If you carry only one weapon, you can choose to make an unarmed strike with your off hand (as an unarmed attack) if you so wish. As part of this maneuver, you make an attack with both weapons you wield against one opponent. Both attacks must target the same creature, and you take a –2 penalty on each attack roll. If your first attack drops your foe to –1 hit points or fewer, you cannot make a second attack.

### WOLF PACK TACTICS

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Two Tiger Claw maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*With each stinging attack that connects against a foe, you slip around him, using the distraction provided by your attacks to prevent him from hindering your movement.*

You prowl the battlefield like a mighty hunter. You pick your spots to attack, striking foes when they are most vulnerable before moving on to attack elsewhere. Each attack allows you to move forward and press your advantage.

While you are in this stance, each successful strike allows you to slowly work your way around an opponent. Each time you make a successful melee attack, you can move 5 feet. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity from the creature you struck. You cannot use this stance to move more than your current speed in a single round.

### WOLVERINE STANCE

Tiger Claw (Stance)
**Level:** Swordsage 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One Tiger Claw maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*Like a cornered wolverine, you fight with unmatched ferocity and rage when your opponents force you into close quarters.*

When an opponent has you in his grasp, you transform into a snarling, frothing, raging beast. You hack with your weapon at your foe's arms or tentacles, your wild frenzy allowing you to fight even with a large, awkward weapon. When you are in the grasp of a larger foe, your frenzy ignites into an inferno as you desperately attempt to break free.

While you are in this stance, you can attack a foe grappling you with any one-handed weapon. You do not take the –4 penalty for fighting while grappled. If your foe is of a larger size category than yours, your feral rage ignites and grants you a +4 bonus on damage rolls against that creature while it continues to grapple you.

## WHITE RAVEN

The White Raven discipline teaches that the combined effort of several warriors working together far exceeds the efforts of those same warriors working individually. Adherents of this tradition serve as leaders and inspiring figures on the battlefield. This discipline's favored weapons are the longsword, battleaxe, greatsword, halberd, and warhammer. Its key skill is Diplomacy.

### BATTLE LEADER'S CHARGE

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 2, warblade 2
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You lead from the front, charging your enemies so that your allies can follow in your wake.*

The White Raven discipline teaches that he who seizes the initiative also seizes victory. You have learned to lead an attack with a mighty charge, the better to disrupt the enemy and inspire your allies in battle.

As part of this maneuver, you charge an opponent. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for moving as part of this charge. If your charge attack hits, it deals an extra 10 points of damage.

### BOLSTERING VOICE

White Raven (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** 60-ft.-radius emanation centered on you
**Duration:** Stance

*Your clarion voice strengthens the will of your comrades. So long as you remain on the field of battle, your allies are strengthened against attacks and effects that seek to subvert their willpower.*

The discipline of the White Raven stresses that an army is effective only when its members are motivated to fight. In the face of a daunting enemy or unexpected hardship, the most skilled warrior is worthless if he lacks strength of will. When you adopt the bolstering voice stance, you shout encouragement to your allies, disparage your foes, and lend much-needed support to raise your allies' spirits. By drawing on the example you set, your allies harden their will to fight and battle on despite your enemies' attempts to turn them aside.

While you are in this stance, all allies within range who can hear you gain a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, or a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against fear effects.

## CLARION CALL

White Raven (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** 60-ft.-radius burst centered on you

*As you defeat an opponent, you shout a battle cry that inspires one of your allies to renew his efforts.*

You are an inspiring figure on the battlefield. Your personal victories are shared by your allies, allowing them to draw courage and vigor from your actions.

If during your turn a melee attack you make reduces an opponent to fewer than 0 hit points, you can initiate this maneuver. Once it is initiated, all allies within range can immediately either make one melee attack at their highest attack bonus or take a single move action. These allies must be able to see and hear you. These extra attacks are not attacks of opportunity.

## COVERING STRIKE

White Raven (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** 3 rounds

*You make a ferocious series of attacks at your enemies, forcing them on the defensive and buying your allies critical seconds needed to slip past them unharmed.*

By drawing on your combat experience and knowledge of how a warrior must carry herself in battle, you make an attack that disrupts your opponents and keeps them from taking advantage of your allies' lapses.

After you initiate this boost, you can make your attacks as normal. In addition to taking normal melee damage from your blows, a foe you strike after initiating this maneuver cannot make attacks of opportunity for 3 rounds. The target still threatens its normal area; it simply cannot make attacks of opportunity.

A creature can be affected by only one covering strike per encounter.

## DOUSE THE FLAMES

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*You strike your enemy with a resounding blow, capturing his attention. As he turns to look, you let loose with a string of oaths, challenges, and taunts that force him to focus his attention on you.*

As a White Raven adept, you are as much a tactician as you are a war leader. You learn to create openings for your allies to maximize the teamwork and esprit de corps that you foster. You know that for a group to succeed, it must work together, and that individual glory must be set aside so that the group can achieve victory.

As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against a single target you threaten. If your attack hits, you deal normal melee damage, and the target creature can't make attacks of opportunity for 1 round. The opponent still threatens its normal area; it simply cannot make attacks of opportunity.

## FLANKING MANEUVER

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your keen leadership grants you and your allies a sudden advantage in combat. When you flank an opponent, you attack in such a way as to maximize your allies' openings. By the same token, your friends' ferocious, accurate attacks give you multiple opportunities to pierce your foe's defenses.*

When you flank an enemy with an ally who can see and hear your directions, the two of you form a potent combination. Your attacks complement each other, leaving the flanked opponent in a tenuous position.

You can use this strike when you and any number of allies flank an opponent you designate. As part of this maneuver, you make a melee attack against the flanked opponent. If your attack hits, any ally flanking your foe can immediately make a melee attack against that creature. These extra attacks are not attacks of opportunity.

Your allies must be able to see you to gain this benefit. The coordination needed between you and your companions demands that you watch each other's attacks, though you do not need to hear each other.

## LEADING THE ATTACK

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*You boldly strike at your enemy. As you attack, you shout a war cry to demonstrate that victory is at hand. This attack inspires nearby allies to join the fray with renewed vigor.*

When you make an attack, your allies take heart in your example and fight with renewed purpose. By stoking the fire of battle in your allies' hearts, you inspire them to greater heroics.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If your attack is successful, your allies gain a +4 morale bonus on attack rolls for 1 round against the creature you hit.

Illus. by H. Lyon

*A dwarven crusader initiates a flanking maneuver and confounds a feral minotaur*

## LEADING THE CHARGE

White Raven (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 1, warblade 1
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** 60-ft.-radius emanation centered on you
**Duration:** Stance

*You fire the confidence and martial spirit of your allies, giving them the energy and bravery needed to make a devastating charge against your enemies.*

The White Raven discipline teaches that tactics, leadership, and planning can overcome an opponent's superior individual abilities. This stance embodies that teaching, allowing you to spur your allies on to greater feats of martial skill.

While you are in this stance, all allies who hear you and make a charge attack in the area gain a bonus on damage rolls equal to your initiator level.

## LION'S ROAR

White Raven (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Targets:** You and allied creatures within 60 ft.
**Duration:** 1 round

*You unleash a sudden battle roar as your mighty blow fells your enemy. Inspired by your example, your allies fight with renewed energy and determination.*

When you defeat an enemy, you call out to your allies to press the attack. They respond by putting tremendous pressure on the enemy as their attacks strike with greater force.

As a swift action, you initiate this boost after you have reduced an opponent to fewer than 0 hit points. You and allies within range gain a +5 morale bonus on damage rolls for 1 round.

## ORDER FORGED FROM CHAOS

White Raven
**Level:** Crusader 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 move action
**Range:** Personal
**Targets:** Allied creatures within 30 ft.

*You bark a series of stern orders, directing your comrades to shift formation. The power of your presence is such that they obey without consciously thinking about it.*

You excel at using your commanding presence to direct your allies on the battlefield. After a few short, barked orders from you, your allies switch positions and assume a tactically advantageous position.

When you initiate this maneuver, all allies within 30 feet of you can immediately take a single move action to move up to their speed. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity, and it does not count toward fulfilling the minimum movement requirements of any special abilities or feats, such as a scout's skirmish ability.

## PRESS THE ADVANTAGE

White Raven (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 5, warblade 5
**Prerequisite:** Two White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You shift across the battlefield, timing your movements precisely to avoid any attacks from your foes.*

Your sense of the battlefield and intuitive understanding of the ebb and flow of combat allow you to move without dropping your defenses. While others must slowly work through a melee, you seize gaps in a foe's defenses and move with great speed and confidence.

While you are in this stance, you can take a second 5-foot step immediately after you take one for the round. This second movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You can make a single 5-foot step into difficult terrain, but if you do, you cannot make the second 5-foot step.

## SWARM TACTICS

White Raven (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** 60-ft.-radius emanation centered on you
**Duration:** Stance

*Your quick directions enable close teamwork between yourself and an ally. At your urging, your allies seize the initiative and work in close coordination with you to defeat an enemy.*

While you are in this stance, you use your tactical knowledge and mastery to improve your allies' teamwork. If you are adjacent to one or more opponents, your allies gain a +5 bonus on attack rolls made against any of those opponents.

## SWARMING ASSAULT

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 7, warblade 7
**Prerequisite:** Three White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You attack an opponent with brutal force, ruining his defenses. As you strike, you call out sharp commands to your allies, spurring them to action and allowing them to take advantage of the opening.*

You inspire your allies with a rousing speech, a war cry, a challenge to the enemy, or some other defiant gesture. Combining this shout with a canny attack, you strip away a foe's defenses, allowing your allies to make potentially devastating attacks.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack against an opponent. If this attack hits, you deal normal melee damage, and any ally who threatens your target can immediately make an attack against him. You choose the order in which your allies' attacks resolve.

## TACTICAL STRIKE

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 2, warblade 2
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your skill at arms and overwhelming power force your opponent to falter at a fatal moment. As the foe attempts to recover from your devastating strike, your allies rush in to finish what you have started.*

You make a mighty attack that knocks your opponent into a defenseless position, granting your allies a moment to move into a better position. If your attack lands true, it leaves your enemy momentarily shaken by its tremendous impact.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If your attack hits, you deal an extra 2d6 points of damage. In addition, each ally adjacent to the target can take an immediate 5-foot step that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

## TACTICS OF THE WOLF

White Raven (Stance)
**Level:** Crusader 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** Personal
**Target:** You
**Duration:** Stance

*You shout orders that help coordinate your allies' efforts. They harass their enemies, shield each other from attacks, and otherwise maximize the support they lend to each other.*

This stance allows you and your allies to gain additional benefits against a flanked opponent. Under your direction, your allies coordinate their actions to a much greater degree than normal. Your advice and shouted orders make them an unstoppable team. Like a wolf pack, your allies fight together to devastating effect.

When you flank a foe, you and allies who flank the enemy with you gain a bonus on damage rolls against that opponent equal to 1/2 your initiator level.

## WAR LEADER'S CHARGE

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 6, warblade 6
**Prerequisite:** Two White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*You summon a great fury within your lungs, releasing it with a titanic shout as you charge forward. Your reckless move startles your foes and puts greater force behind your attack.*

As a student of the White Raven, you learn to focus the energy within you into an overwhelming charge. In battle, you must lead from the front.

As part of this maneuver, you charge an opponent. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for moving as part of this charge. If your charge attack hits, it deals an extra 35 points of damage.

## WAR MASTER'S CHARGE

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 9, warblade 9
**Prerequisite:** Four White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 full-round action
**Range:** Melee attack; see text
**Target:** One creature; see text

*With a great battle cry, you lead your allies in a devastating charge. Fired by your commanding presence and deftly led by your supreme grasp of tactics, you and your allies form an unstoppable wedge.*

You are an inspiring figure on the battlefield, allowing you to lead others on attacks that would strike fear and doubt into even the stoutest warrior's heart. Under your leadership, the group becomes much more than the sum of its parts.

As part of this maneuver, you charge an opponent. In addition, all allies within 30 feet of you at the beginning of your turn can also charge this target as an immediate action. You and allied creatures do not block each other when determining if you can charge. Your charge attack deals an extra 50 points of damage, and those of your allies each deal an extra 25 points of damage. For each ally who charges, counting yourself, your charge attack and those of your allies are made with a cumulative +2 bonus (in addition to the normal bonus provided by charging). An opponent struck by you and at least one other ally is stunned for 1 round.

You and your allies do not provoke attacks of opportunity for moving as part of this charge.

## WHITE RAVEN HAMMER

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 8, warblade 8
**Prerequisite:** Three White Raven maneuvers
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature
**Duration:** 1 round

*You slam your opponent with a mighty attack to disrupt his senses and leave him unable to defend himself while your allies close to finish him off.*

*A crusader of Hextor uses a war master's charge to coordinate his minions*

Illus. by J. Nentrup

As part of this maneuver, you make a single, devastating strike against an opponent. The raw force of this blow knocks him senseless. Your attack deals an extra 6d6 points of damage and stuns your opponent for 1 round.

## WHITE RAVEN STRIKE

White Raven (Strike)
**Level:** Crusader 4, warblade 4
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Melee attack
**Target:** One creature

*Your eye for tactics allows you to notice an enemy's weak points and attack them with a mighty blow.*

The White Raven discipline focuses on tactics, teamwork, and the ability to make an attack that improves your allies' abilities. This strike ruins a foe's defenses.

As part of this maneuver, you make a single melee attack. If it hits, you deal an extra 4d6 points of damage, and the target is considered flat-footed until the start of his next turn.

## WHITE RAVEN TACTICS

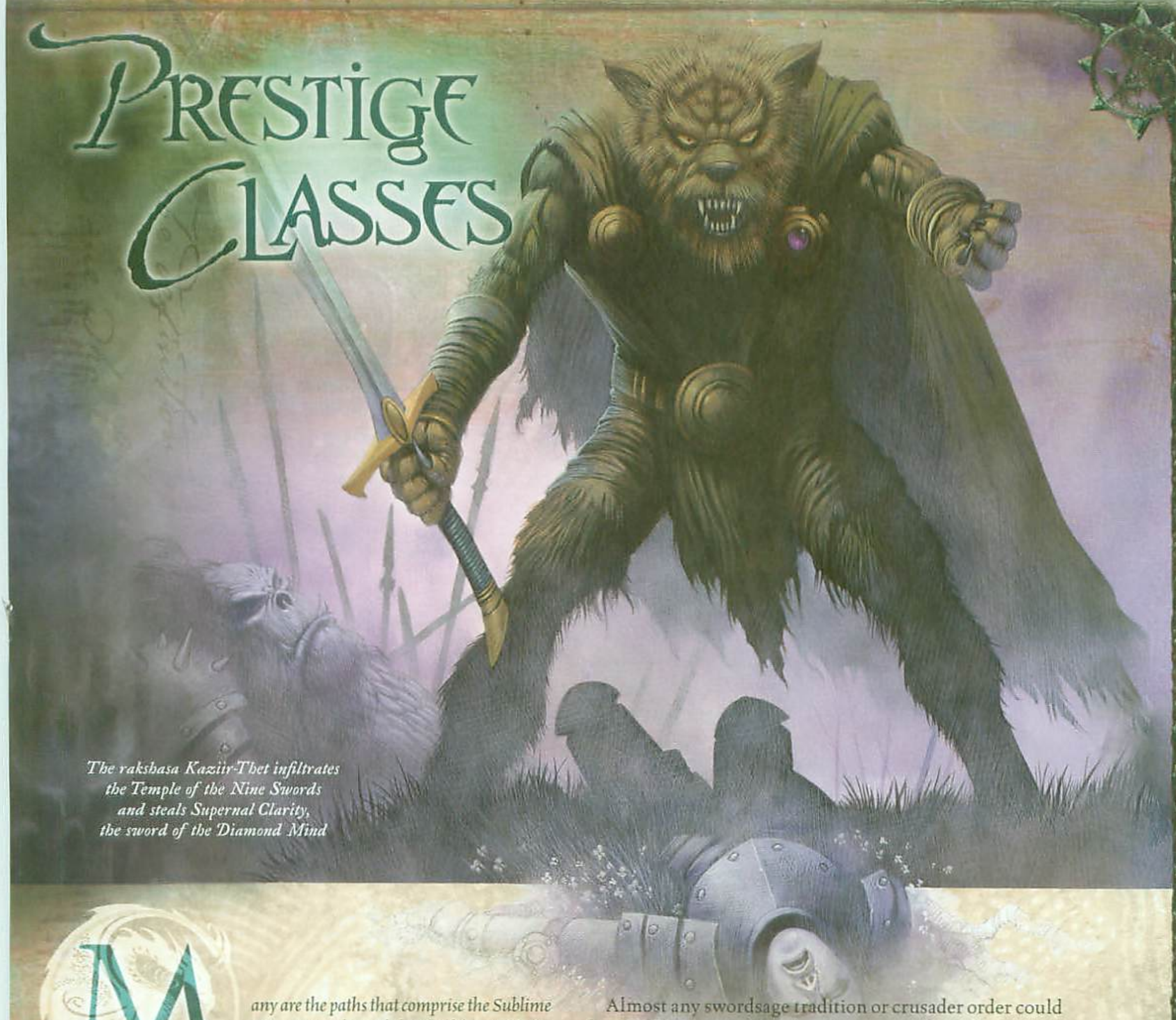
White Raven (Boost)
**Level:** Crusader 3, warblade 3
**Prerequisite:** One White Raven maneuver
**Initiation Action:** 1 swift action
**Range:** 10 ft.
**Target:** One ally

*You can inspire your allies to astounding feats of martial prowess. With a few short orders, you cajole them into seizing the initiative and driving back the enemy.*

Your knowledge of tactics can aid your allies' attacks, and it also allows you to spot, predict, and counter your enemies' actions. In the chaos of battle, you impose the order needed for tight, effective group tactics.

When you use this maneuver, select an ally within range. Her initiative count immediately equals your initiative count –1. She then acts on her new initiative count as normal. If she has already acted in the current round, she can act again. If this maneuver would not change your ally's initiative count, it has no effect. If she has not yet acted during this round, her initiative count changes, and she acts on that count as normal. She does not act again on her original initiative count.

# PRESTIGE CLASSES



*The rakshasa Kaziir-Thet infiltrates the Temple of the Nine Swords and steals Supernal Clarity, the sword of the Diamond Mind*

*Many are the paths that comprise the Sublime Way. Across the wide lands of the world, the traveler might find crusader orders devoted to any of a dozen different gods, wandering swordsages who travel and teach those who are willing and ready, and proud warblades by the score in search of their fleeting moments of fame. Orders, brotherhoods, secret societies, hidden temples, forgotten monasteries, ninja clans—each passes on its own exercises, forms, stories, and techniques. I know of a few such martial traditions, and I will speak of them now. Doubtless you will discover many more in your own travels, my students.*

—Harran Turiyeshor

The study of martial lore naturally lends itself to the pursuit of various elite, obscure, or hidden traditions. Reclusive swordsage masters invent never-before-seen maneuvers and teach these secrets only to a few chosen students; crusader orders teach their novices austerities and catechisms that are as powerful as divine spells; and famous warblades are renowned for their signature moves or tactics.

Almost any swordsage tradition or crusader order could be considered a prestige class, because each one has its own particular philosophy, history, teachings, and special moves. This chapter presents eight prestige classes, each representing a separate tradition of the Sublime Way.

**Bloodclaw Master:** This feral warrior is a master of the Tiger Claw discipline. He takes on bestial characteristics when he fights.

**Bloodstorm Blade:** Master of thrown weapons, a bloodstorm blade can execute devastating ranged attacks with his sword, axe, or hammer.

**Deepstone Sentinel:** Imbued with the power of elemental earth, this dwarf champion commands the very rock to do his bidding.

**Eternal Blade:** A champion of the elf race, an eternal blade seeks to follow the path appointed him by his blade guide—the spirit of a mighty elf hero of old.

**Jade Phoenix Mage:** Skilled in both arcane magic and martial maneuvers, a Jade Phoenix mage is reborn in life after life to maintain an unending vigil against evil.

*Illus. by W. England*

**Master of Nine:** Rarest and most renowned of martial adepts, a master of nine wields the lore and power of all nine martial disciplines.

**Ruby Knight Vindicator:** A secretive avenger, a vindicator serves as Wee Jas's final answer to threats against the faith.

**Shadow Sun Ninja:** Spy, warrior, and assassin, a Shadow Sun ninja uses the powers of both light and darkness to defeat his foes.

## ADVANCING MARTIAL PROGRESSION

Most of the prestige classes presented in this chapter offer some amount of continuing progression to a character's existing maneuvers known and maneuvers readied. Martial abilities acquired through progression in a prestige class simply add to the character's existing martial maneuvers.

If you have martial maneuvers from a feat, rather than from a class, things work a little differently. The prestige class grants you new maneuvers as normal. You simply add them to the maneuvers you know because of feats you have. You also initiate and recover these maneuvers in the same manner as you initiate and recover other ones. Later on, you might take levels in the crusader, swordsage, or warblade class. Maneuvers you had prior to entering one of those classes continue to function as they did previously. Track their use and recovery separately from those granted by the martial adept class levels.

### MARTIAL ADEPTS

If you have levels in a martial adept standard class (crusader, swordsage, or warblade), you retain the same method for readying and recovering maneuvers that you previously used. If you have levels in two or more martial adept standard classes (for example, you are a multiclass swordsage/warblade), you must decide to which of your existing martial adept classes the new maneuvers known or maneuvers readied apply.

**Maneuvers Known:** When you gain additional maneuvers known, these simply add to the maneuvers known of one martial adept standard class you already possess. You might be able to pick new maneuvers from only a handful of disciplines.

**Maneuvers Readied:** When indicated, you gain the ability to ready one or more additional martial maneuvers. If you have more than one martial maneuver progression, you must choose which progression the additional readied maneuver slot applies to. If you choose to add the maneuver readied to a martial maneuver progression derived from crusader class levels, you also gain one additional maneuver granted at the beginning of the encounter for each additional maneuver you can ready.

**Stances Known:** If a class grants new stances known, you can select stances from the disciplines available based on the prestige class.

**Recovery:** You retain the same recovery method or methods you already use. If you have levels in more than one martial adept class, you choose which recovery method you will use based on which adept class the new maneuver you are learning applies to. Once this choice is made, it cannot be changed.

### NONMARTIAL ADEPTS

If you do not have any levels in a martial adept standard class (crusader, swordsage, or warblade) before gaining levels in a prestige class that improves your martial maneuver progression, some special rules apply.

**Maneuvers Known:** The number of maneuvers you know is determined by the number of times you select the Martial Study feat, plus the number of new maneuvers known you gain from your prestige class advancement.

**Maneuvers Readied:** The number of maneuvers you can ready is equal to the number of maneuvers you have learned by means of the Martial Study feat, plus the number of new maneuvers readied you gain from your prestige class advancement. If the number of maneuvers you know exceeds the number you are permitted to ready, you must choose which maneuvers to ready and which to leave unreadied, just like a standard martial adept. You can change your selection of readied maneuvers with 5 minutes of exercise and meditation.

**Stances Known:** If a class grants new stances known, you can select stances from the disciplines available based on the prestige class.

**Recovery:** You cannot recover expended maneuvers in an encounter if you do not have levels in a martial adept class, so each of your readied maneuvers is usable once per encounter. You can recover your expended maneuvers outside combat with 5 minutes of exercise and meditation.

If you gain access to a prestige class by taking the Martial Study feat, and that class has its own progression of maneuvers known, those new maneuvers can be used only once per encounter. You retain the recovery method you previously had. If you then took martial adept levels, you could recover maneuvers you gained as a result of those levels as a member of that class, but the maneuvers from your previous levels would still be usable only once per encounter.

## BLOODCLAW MASTER

*"My blades thirst for blood."*

—Rhaskana, Bloodclaw Secretkeeper

A bloodclaw master embraces the animal within to a degree that it becomes external, partially transforming him into the beast from which the discipline was inspired. He employs small, light weapons almost like claws. He focuses on the Tiger Claw discipline, and his maneuvers speak to the quick-striking nature of his discipline's feline namesake.

### BECOMING A BLOODCLAW MASTER

This class favors those who prefer fighting with two light weapons, and who are fond of the maneuvers of the Tiger Claw discipline. Most bloodclaw masters are swordsages or warblades of the Tiger Claw discipline. Some barbarians also choose to embrace their inner beast, becoming a bloodclaw master after either taking a few martial adept class levels

**Table 5–1: The Bloodclaw Master Hit Die: d12**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +2 | +0 | 1 | 0 | Shifting 1/day, claws of the beast |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +3 | +0 | 0 | 0 | Superior two-weapon fighting, tiger claw synergy (stance) |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +3 | +1 | 1 | 1 | Pouncing strike, low-light vision, shifting 2/day |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +1 | 0 | 0 | Tiger claw synergy (strike) |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +1 | 1 | 0 | Rending claws, scent, shifting 3/day |

**Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Climb, Handle Animal, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (nature), Listen, Martial Lore*, Move Silently, Spot, Survival.

*New skill described on page 28.

or selecting the Martial Study feat enough times to meet the entry requirements. A few rogues also consider this class, because sneak attacks made with two weapons are especially deadly.

### Entry Requirements

**Skills:** Jump 9 ranks.

**Feats:** Multiattack or Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know three Tiger Claw maneuvers.

## CLASS FEATURES

As you advance as a bloodclaw master, you become more like the tiger that inspired your chosen martial discipline. You gain mastery of more Tiger Claw maneuvers, while also gaining the ability to shift into a feral form.

**Maneuvers:** At each odd-numbered level, you gain a new maneuver known from the Tiger Claw discipline. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full bloodclaw master levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 3rd level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Shifting (Su):** You can become more like a tiger by focusing your feral nature. Once per day, you can enter a state that is superficially similar to a barbarian's rage. While you are shifting, your appearance takes on tigerlike aspects: Your fingernails become more pointed and clawlike, the irises of your eyes become narrow, catlike slits, your ears grow more pointed, and so on. While shifting, you gain a +2 bonus to Strength and you grow claws that can be used as natural weapons. These claws deal 1d4 points of damage with each successful attack. You can attack with one claw as a standard action or with two claws as a full attack action (as a primary natural weapon). You cannot attack more than once per round with a single claw, even if your base attack bonus is high enough to give you multiple attacks. You can attack with a claw as a light off-hand weapon while wielding a weapon in your primary hand, but doing so incurs the normal penalties for fighting with two weapons.

Shifting is a free action and lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Con modifier + your bloodclaw master class level. At 3rd level and again at 5th level, you gain an additional daily use of your shifting ability.

**Claws of the Beast (Ex):** When attacking with two daggers or Tiger Claw weapons (kukri, kama, handaxe, unarmed strike, or claws), you add your full Strength bonus to damage rolls made for your off-hand weapon.

**Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex):** Starting at 2nd level, when you attack with two daggers or Tiger Claw weapons, you do not take the –2 penalty on attack rolls for fighting with two weapons.

**Tiger Claw Synergy (Ex):** Beginning at 2nd level, while you are in a Tiger Claw stance, you can choose to gain either a +1 dodge bonus to your Armor Class or a +10-foot bonus to your base speed. You make this choice when you enter the stance.

At 4th level, you become more accurate at dealing Tiger Claw strikes. You gain a +1 bonus on any attack rolls made as part of a strike from the Tiger Claw discipline.

**Pouncing Strike (Ex):** From 3rd level on, when wielding two weapons, you can take a standard action to make a single melee attack with each weapon. Each attack is made at your highest attack bonus. You can also make an attack with each weapon against an opponent at the end of a charge.

When you use pouncing strike, you lose the use of one Tiger Claw strike you have readied for the current encounter, just as if you had initiated the strike (except you do not also gain the strike's normal effect). Once you use this ability, you can recover the maneuver you expended and use it normally.

**Low-Light Vision (Ex):** At 3rd level, your eyes function better in dim light, as you adopt the senses of the tiger. You gain low-light vision.

## SHIFTERS AND THE BLOODCLAW MASTER

A shifter character, from the Eberron campaign setting, gains slightly different benefits from taking levels in this class. The class's shifting ability instead grants the shifter one additional shift per day at 1st and 5th levels (but not 3rd level), and the duration of the character's racial shifting ability is increased by 1 round for each level he takes in this prestige class. The PC is treated as having the razorclaw shifter trait for the purpose of meeting prerequisites (such as for other shifter feats).

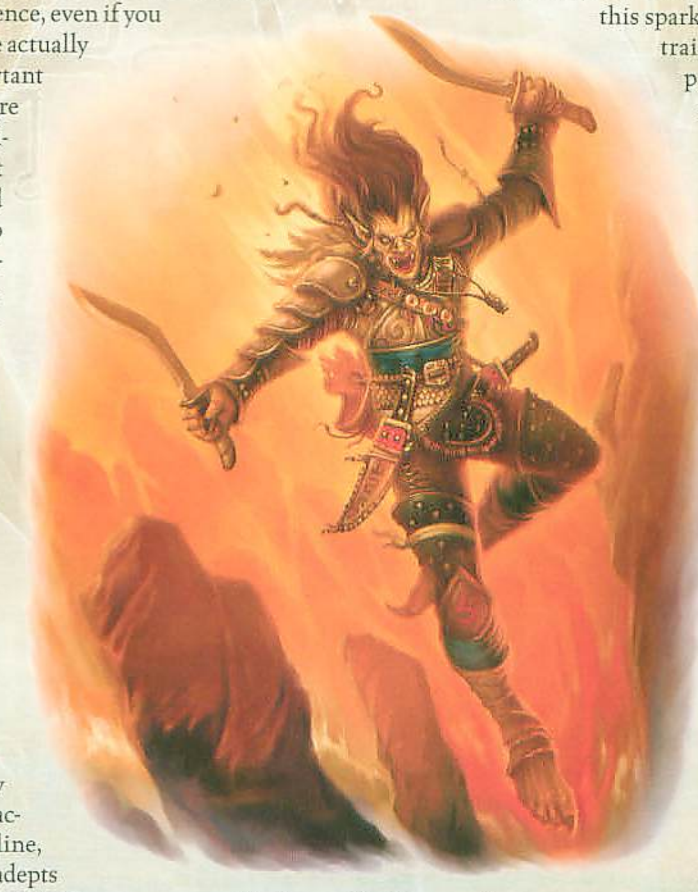
**Rending Claws (Ex):** At 5th level, while you are shifting and attacking with two daggers or two Tiger Claw weapons and you successfully hit an opponent with both weapons in the same round, the second weapon that hits deals an extra 2d6 points of damage. This effect is considered a boost from the Tiger Claw discipline.

When you use rending claws, you lose the use of one Tiger Claw boost you have readied for the current encounter, just as if you had initiated the boost (except you do not also gain the boost's normal effect). Once you use this ability, you can recover the maneuver you expended and use it normally.

**Scent (Ex):** Once you have reached 5th level, your heightened animalistic senses also give you the ability to smell nearby creatures. You gain the scent special ability (*MM* 314).

## PLAYING A BLOODCLAW MASTER

Like the tiger, you are aloof and proud, but quick to act when a situation demands it. Some mistake your demeanor for arrogance, but you know your attitude is more like patience. You seek to learn the details around a circumstance before offering your input. When you speak, you do so sagely, with confidence, even if you aren't certain that you are actually correct. It is more important that others believe you are right, that you are infallible. Your patience is not infinite, however, and you are always eager to spring into action. Nothing bothers you more than spending a long period of time in a small, enclosed room with nothing to do and no one to kill. As you identify with your internal tiger, you adopt external ways of displaying your bond, perhaps by striping your arms or face with black soot or adorning yourself with jewelry fashioned from tooth and claw.



*Rhaskana, a bloodclaw master*

*Illus. by H. Lynn*

Bloodclaw masters are held in high esteem by many followers of the fractious Tiger Claw discipline, though some Tiger Claw adepts harbor jealousy or even loathing for those who follow the bloodclaw master path. As a bloodclaw master, you fight with a ferocity and cunning that surpasses all but the most skilled masters of Tiger Claw. A few believe that your ferocity dilutes the purity of Tiger Claw, and that bloodclaw masters mark a regression in the advancement of the discipline. Others simply bide their time, waiting like a tiger for you to drop your guard. Even so, every proclaimed student of the Tiger Claw will give you the honor and respect deserving of your expertise.

### COMBAT

Half of a battle occurs before the fight begins. You prefer to choose your battleground, to stalk your opponent into terrain that best suits your abilities. Once battle is joined, you become a frenzy of motion, striking quickly and at the most vulnerable target available, hindering your opponents' ability to react. You lead with a charge, shifting along the way, to get yourself in position where your claws or your kukris can deal the most damage. Taking advantage of your leaping skills, you jump to any available high ground to gain an upper hand.

### ADVANCEMENT

In your hands, small blades are like an extension of your own hands—like claws made of steel. The strikes and counters of the Tiger Claw discipline are natural extensions of your own combat ability. Following the path of bloodclaw master speaks to your feral nature, letting you become one with the beast in your heart. Masters of the Tiger Claw see this spark within you, and through your training you have learned of the path of the beast and what you must do to unlock it.

As a bloodclaw master, you have earned your way into an elite subsect of the Tiger Claw school. Your abilities are revered by many, especially those relatively new to the discipline. Older masters who have not embraced their own inner tigers might view you with disdain, but even they must recognize the power you wield.

To fully utilize some of the best Tiger Claw maneuvers, you will want to keep your Jump skill maximized. If you haven't already, you should take the Blade Meditation feat. Tiger Blooded is an ideal feat to take if you have a barbarian level, and you can use Martial Study to further expand your Tiger Claw maneuver repertoire. Many of your maneuvers key off critical hits, so Improved Critical can increase those opportunities.

### RESOURCES

A fellow student or master of the Tiger Claw is obliged to provide food and lodging for a short time, unless you are enemies for some reason. You, in turn, are expected to provide a demonstration of your abilities, showing your host the true nature of the tiger. Since the bloodclaw masters are not a recognized group or authority, even within the Tiger Claw discipline, any additional support is unlikely. More often, a master might provide a task or quest that serves his own ends, but you are not under any particular obligation to accept it.

## BLOODCLAW MASTERS IN THE WORLD

*"What's worse than a raging weretiger? A raging weretiger with a huge axe."*

—Aubren Starchaser, ranger of the north

Bloodclaw masters are feral fighters that represent the purest form of the Tiger Claw discipline, at least in their own minds. They are a specialized extension of the martial classes, an example of how a character might embody the essence of a particular martial school. In the case of Tiger Claw, the followers of the discipline itself are fragmented and disorganized, and a bloodclaw master could just as easily be a valuable ally or a memorable foe.

### ORGANIZATION

It is said that a mountain can be home to only one tiger. In ages past, the Tiger Claw martial school had many monasteries and fighting colleges, but now the former order is fractured and in shambles after many of the masters met their end following the destruction of the Temple of the Nine Swords and the death of the Tiger Lord. Now, masters of the Tiger Claw are few and far between. Although they show each other courtesy, many work against each other for their own petty ends. Bloodclaw masters are seen by the discipline's masters as pawns they can use to gain personal power, and even while they provide training, they secretly plot to use their pupils against their rivals.

### NPC REACTIONS

The sometimes outlandish appearance and marked standoffishness of bloodclaw masters tends to intimidate most people. Those who have significant knowledge of the martial paths give due respect to a bloodclaw master, but the reception by others depends on the venue. People in locales that adventurers frequent are more likely to be indifferent to a bloodclaw master, while those in more upscale environs tend to be unfriendly.

## BLOODCLAW MASTER LORE

Characters with ranks in Martial Lore can research bloodclaw masters to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** Somehow, these people can turn in to tigers.

**DC 15:** Bloodclaw masters are fierce two-weapon wielders in combat.

**DC 20:** They are masters of a martial discipline, known as the Tiger Claw, that allows them to channel an inner beast to briefly transform themselves into a form not unlike a tiger.

**DC 30:** Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about a specific notable bloodclaw master, the areas where he operates, and the kinds of activities he undertakes.

A character with the Gather Information skill can attempt a DC 25 check to locate a bloodclaw master, provided one is in the region. Alternately, he might attempt to locate a master of the Tiger Claw discipline, who could at least provide information and background on the bloodclaw master and the way of the beast. Doing so requires the master's attitude to be helpful.

## BLOODCLAW MASTERS IN THE GAME

Bloodclaw masters epitomize the Tiger Claw discipline. A campaign that incorporates multiple martial schools can use bloodclaw masters to represent the more active members of the Tiger Claw school. Even a setting that is not entirely integrated with the martial classes could incorporate a bloodclaw master as a lone warrior.

The class appeals greatly to players who want to focus a martial adept character in the Tiger Claw school. Players fond of dual-weapon-wielding characters will also be drawn to this class. The specialist, rather than the generalist, will find the bloodclaw master appealing.

### ADAPTATION

In the Eberron setting, bloodclaw masters are typically shifters who use the teachings of Tiger Claw and the way of the bloodclaw master to bring themselves closer to their animalistic heritage. Groups of Tiger Claw adepts and bloodclaw masters share their martial knowledge in conclaves throughout the Eldeen Reaches.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Bloodclaw masters tend to stay on the fringe of civilization. They are loners who rarely seek out the company of others unless they have a compelling reason to do so.

**EL 9:** Rhaskana the bloodclaw master is a scowling, foul-tempered warrior. He takes any minor slight, perceived or otherwise, as an excuse to duel one of the PCs.

**RHASKANA** **CR 9**

Male human warblade 6/bloodclaw master 3
NG Medium humanoid (human)
**Init** +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +3
**Languages** Common, Elven

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**AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 22; Dodge
(+3 Dex, +7 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)
**hp** 73 (9 HD)
**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Melee** *+1 kukri* +12/+7 melee (1d4+5/18–20) and
*+1 kukri* +12/+7 melee (1d4+5/18–20) with Two-Weapon Fighting or
**Melee** *+1 kukri* +12/+7 melee (1d4+5/18–20) or
**Melee** claws +10/+10 (1d4+2)
**Base Atk** +8; **Grp** +10

**Atk Options** Blood Meditation (Tiger Claw), battle ardor +1, tiger claw synergy (stance)
**Special Actions** shifting 2/day (+2 Strength, 4 rounds)
**Combat Gear** *potion of endurance*

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**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 9th):
*Stances*—blood in the water (1st), punishing stance (1st)
*Strikes*—claw at the moon† (2nd), death from above† (4th), pouncing charge† (5th), soaring raptor strike (3rd), steel wind (1st), wolf fang strike† (1st)
*Boosts*—sudden leap† (1st)
*Counters*—wall of blades (2nd)
*Disciplines:* Iron Heart, Tiger Claw
† Readied maneuver

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**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
**SQ** Improved uncanny dodge
**Feats** Blade Meditation (Tiger Claw)*B, Dodge, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (kukri), Weapon Specialization (kukri)
*New feat described on page 28
**Skills** Balance +13, Climb +8, Concentration +2, Intimidate +8, Jump +20, Martial Lore +13, Spot +3, Tumble +11
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+2 breastplate,* two *+1 kukris, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +1, ring of jumping*

# BLOODSTORM BLADE

*"My anger is a building storm. When it breaks, my enemies' blood will drench the ground like rain."*
—Varand Thunderhand, bloodstorm blade

Other martial adepts rightfully look with wonder upon those who learn the bloodstorm style. Once a secret art jealously guarded by a sword-cult of githyanki warblades, bloodstorm techniques now find use in the hands of martial adepts of many races—most notably, the informal mercenary organization known as the Bloodstorm Guild. The style takes knowledge from the Iron Heart discipline and applies it to attacks with thrown weapons. A bloodstorm blade who masters these methods often becomes more deadly when a weapon leaves his hands than when he holds onto it.

## BECOMING A BLOODSTORM BLADE

Almost all bloodstorm blades begin their careers as warblades, since that class offers the easiest and most obvious path to mastery of the bloodstorm style. A few bloodstorm blades find their way to the class through other routes, usually by means of the Martial Study feat. Other than warblades, fighters most often become bloodstorm blades, but barbarians, rangers, rogues, and monks can also be counted among their number.

Although the bloodstorm blade prestige class primarily features abilities that augment ranged attacks, a high Dexterity score is unnecessary because a character can make use of the thunderous throw ability. Alternatively, a character with a high Dexterity score and relatively low Strength score can forgo using thunderous throw and instead optimize by taking Combat Reflexes and using eye of the storm. Either type of character can take feats that increase prowess and attack power with a single melee weapon; the benefits of either approach apply to both ranged and melee attacks.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Skills:** Balance 8 ranks.
**Feats:** Point Blank Shot.
**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know one Iron Heart strike and one Iron Heart stance.

**TABLE 5–2: THE BLOODSTORM BLADE  HIT DIE: D12**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | Returning attacks, Throw Anything, weapon aptitude |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | Martial throw, thunderous throw |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | Bonus fighter feat |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Lightning ricochet |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | Blood wind ricochet |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +2 | Bonus fighter feat |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +2 | Eye of the storm |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +2 | Blood rain |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +3 | Bonus fighter feat |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +3 | +3 | Blade storm |

**Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Concentration, Craft, Intimidate, Jump, Martial Lore*, Spot, Tumble.
*New skill described on page 28.

## CLASS FEATURES

As a bloodstorm blade, you gain extraordinary mastery over attacks with thrown weapons, and you learn to throw nearly any weapon at your foes. These abilities lend themselves to a strong focus on a single weapon of choice that you can then wield both in melee and at range. Some of the bloodstorm blade class features require you to expend a use of an Iron Heart strike for an encounter, or subsume the effects of an Iron Heart stance.

**Returning Attacks (Ex):** You can hurl your weapon at a foe and command it to ricochet back to you. Any weapon you throw behaves as though it has the returning special ability (DMG 225).

When you use returning attacks, you lose the use of one Iron Heart strike you have readied for the current encounter, just as if you had initiated the strike (except you do not also gain the strike's normal effect). Once you use this ability, you can recover the maneuver you expended and use it normally.

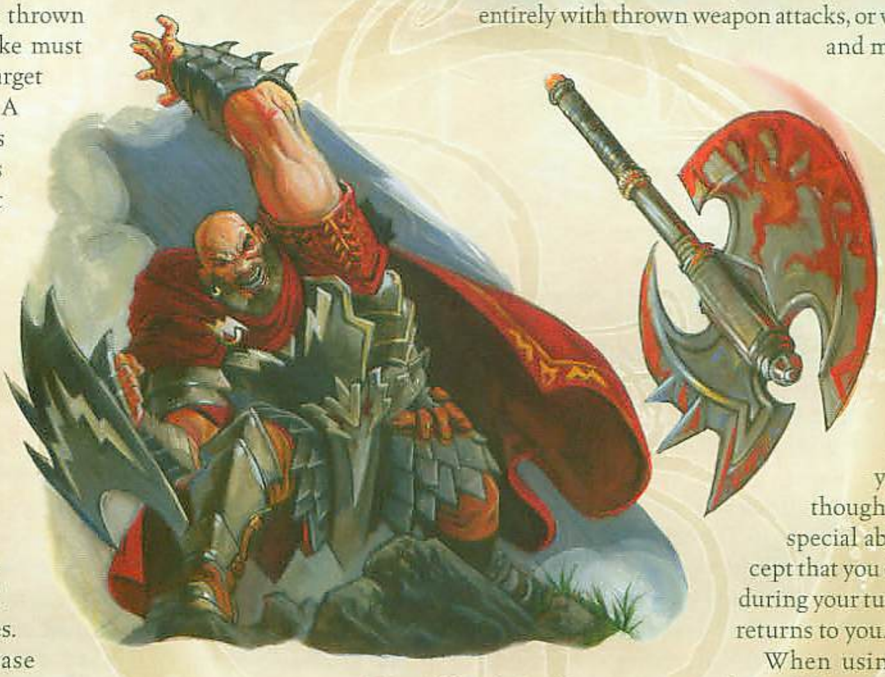
**Throw Anything:** As an initiate of the mysteries of the bloodstorm technique, you learn to throw swords as easily as others hurl daggers. You gain Throw Anything (see the sidebar) as a bonus feat.

**Weapon Aptitude (Ex):** Your training with a wide range of weaponry and tactics allows you the opportunity to gain great skill with particular weapons. You can qualify for feats requiring a minimum number of fighter levels (such as Weapon Specialization) as if you had a fighter level equal to your combined warblade and bloodstorm blade levels –2.

Furthermore, you have the flexibility to adjust your weapon training. Each morning, you can spend 1 hour practicing and change the weapons selected for any feat you have that applies only to a single chosen weapon. For example, you could change your Weapon Focus (greataxe) feat so its benefit applies to longswords instead.

You can adjust any number of your feats in this way, and you don't have to adjust them all in the same way. You can't change the weapon choices in such a way that you no longer meet a feat's prerequisite. For instance, you must be proficient with a weapon chosen for Weapon Focus; and if you have both Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization with the longsword, you couldn't change Weapon Focus without also changing Weapon Specialization to the same weapon. You must also have that weapon available during practice; if you don't have a longsword handy, you can't assign your feats to affect longswords.

**Martial Throw (Ex):** Starting at 2nd level, you can initiate a strike from the Iron Heart discipline with a thrown weapon. The strike must be one that has a target of one creature. A strike that targets multiple creatures or objects cannot be used with martial throw.



*Varand Thunderhand, bloodstorm blade*

**Thunderous Throw (Ex):** Beginning at 2nd level, you build up incredible tension as you ready yourself to throw your weapon, which becomes visible around you like heat waves. When you release your weapon, that power rushes out with your weapon.

As a swift action, you can choose to treat your ranged attack rolls with thrown weapons as melee attacks for the rest of your turn. You use your melee attack bonus, including Strength bonus, feats, and so forth, to determine your attack bonus for each attack as normal, but you apply the standard modifiers for range penalties. Attacking into melee, through cover, and so forth incurs the standard penalties.

In addition, you can apply 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus to damage if you wield the thrown weapon with two hands, and you can use Power Attack with your thrown weapon attacks (adding two times the number subtracted from attack rolls as a bonus on damage rolls when throwing a two-handed weapon).

**Bonus Fighter Feat:** Bloodstorm blades study all aspects of combat as they learn to rain blows down upon distant foes and enemies close at hand. At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, you gain a bonus feat chosen from the list of fighter bonus feats. You must meet the prerequisite of the feat to take it.

**Lightning Ricochet (Ex):** From 4th level on, you can throw your weapon at a nearby foe and command it to immediately bounce back to your grasp. Any time you make a ranged attack with a thrown weapon on your turn, the weapon immediately returns to you, and you can catch it as a free action. This ability allows you to make a full attack entirely with thrown weapon attacks, or with a mix of thrown and melee attacks.

**Blood Wind Ricochet (Ex):** As a full-round action, at 5th level and higher, you can hurl a weapon at a foe and compel it to ricochet to other enemies before hurtling back to your waiting hand. The weapon you throw behaves as though it has the returning special ability (*DMG* 225), except that you determine the point during your turn when the weapon returns to you.

When using this ability, you make a full attack with a thrown weapon, but each ranged attack must be resolved against a separate target. You can choose the order in which you attack your foes. Range and cover penalties are resolved for each attack after the first as though that attack originated from the space of the creature you last attacked. If a creature has total cover relative to you, you cannot attack it.

When you use blood wind ricochet, you lose the use of one Iron Heart strike you have readied for the current encounter, just as if you had initiated the strike (except you do not also gain the strike's normal effect). Once you use this

Illus. by S. Ellis

## THROW ANYTHING

Originally presented in the *Complete Warrior* supplement, this feat makes any weapon a deadly ranged weapon in your hands.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 15, proficiency with weapon, base attack bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You can throw a melee weapon you are proficient with as if it were a ranged weapon. The range increment of weapons used in conjunction with this feat is 10 feet.

**Normal:** You can't throw a melee weapon without taking a –4 penalty unless it has a range increment (such as a hand axe or dagger).

ability, you can recover the maneuver you expended and use it normally.

**Eye of the Storm (Ex):** At 7th level, you learn to center your being and adopt a mindset of calm readiness despite the furor of battle raging about you. While you are in an Iron Heart stance, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of eye of the storm. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the Iron Heart stance, or as described below. You can also stop using eye of the storm and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

When you use this ability, you gain a +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against ranged attacks and a +2 competence bonus on Reflex saves. In addition, when a foe makes an attack of opportunity against you when you make a ranged attack while threatened, you can make a single melee attack against that foe as a swift action (assuming you're not unarmed and you threaten the foe). Such an attack does not count as an attack of opportunity. To retain this defensive posture, you can move no more than 10 feet on your turn.

**Blood Rain (Ex):** Beginning at 8th level, you can enter a state that enables you to inflict a terrible bleeding wound on any living creature you damage with a thrown weapon or a melee attack. While you are in an Iron Heart stance, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of blood rain. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the Iron Heart stance, or as described below. You can also stop using blood rain and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

The creature you hit with your attack takes 3 points of damage due to blood loss at the beginning of your turn each round. This effect ends if you stop using the stance. An affected creature can end the effect by being the beneficiary of any healing (such as a *cure* spell) or a DC 15 Heal check. The bleeding effect of blood rain does not stack with itself or the blood rain ability of another bloodstorm blade.

**Blade Storm (Ex):** At 10th level, you can hurl your weapon as a full-round action to make it seem as if you are attacking a dozen foes at once. You become the center of a storm of steel as your thrown weapon flies out to strike a foe, returns to ricochet harmlessly off you, then flies out to attack another foe.

You can make a ranged attack with a thrown weapon at your highest attack bonus against as many targets as you wish. You can attack each target just once with this attack, calculating range and cover penalties from your position on the battlefield.

When you use blade storm, you lose the use of one Iron Heart strike you have readied for the current encounter, just as if you had initiated the strike (except you do not also gain the strike's normal effect). Once you use this ability, you can recover the maneuver you expended and use it normally.

## PLAYING A BLOODSTORM BLADE

Battle gives you a thrilling sense of lightness and the feeling that you command the very air that your weapon parts as it flies to and from your enemies. In combat, you need only cock your wrist in the right manner, and your consciousness seems to expand to encompass the whole fight. In that instant, your mind's eye clearly sees the angle and vector of your enemies' limbs, it detects the minute details and defects of their armor, and it knows with absolute certainty the distances that lie between. The moment you release your weapon, that queer knowledge leaves you, but when the satisfying heft of your weapon slaps back into your waiting palm a moment later, you know that knowledge will be yours again with your next throw.

Your skill with thrown weapons is unmatched except perhaps by other bloodstorm blades, and knowing that gives you tremendous confidence. You likely specialize in the use of a single kind of weapon, and with it in your possession, you feel unstoppable. Should you lose it, you still command amazing abilities, but you tend to be moody and irritable until you regain your weapon or another of its kind.

### COMBAT

As a bloodstorm blade, you can fight at range and in melee with equal ferocity, but foes more than a stone's throw away can prove to be troublesome, so it's always best to move close. Once you stand among your enemies, it's time to unleash a storm of ranged attacks. If someone is brave enough to engage you in melee, you can battle him toe to toe, or step back and continue to rain blows across the battlefield.

At low levels, you fight much as you did before becoming a bloodstorm blade, but you have the added benefit of being able to attack a foe at range using your melee weapon. Often, the best use of this ability will be to throw your weapon at a foe as you close to melee range. Be sure not to leave yourself unarmed. Wearing spiked gauntlets presents a simple solution, but other options, such as the Quick Draw feat or shield bash, might be more advantageous.

As you gain more bloodstorm blade abilities, your tactics become more varied. You can use lightning ricochet to

### STOPPING A RETURNING WEAPON

It might seem logical to ready an action to grab a weapon that flies about the battlefield or somehow strike it from the air, but a thrown weapon is no more vulnerable to such tactics than an arrow. Although a feat such as Deflect Arrows remains useful protection, a thrown weapon with the returning special ability must be treated like any other thrown weapon. Once thrown, it is in rapid constant motion and never hovers or hangs in the air.

However, some of the tactics that work against arrows can be effective against a bloodstorm blade's thrown weapon attacks. For example, a creature could ready an action to close a door between itself and a bloodstorm blade when the blade throws a weapon. If the readied action was contingent on the weapon being thrown, the closed door would provide total cover against the attack. If the readied action was contingent on the weapon passing through the open door, the weapon would attack the bloodstorm blade's intended target, but would be prevented from returning and fall to the floor after making its attack (whether successful or not), since line of effect no longer exists between the weapon and its wielder.

attack a foe as you move and still ready your weapon before the enemy closes to melee range. You can also use lightning ricochet after taking down a foe in melee, using a ranged attack to soften up an enemy you have not yet engaged. Using blood wind ricochet and eye of the storm, you become a deadly ranged attacker with ample defenses against your enemies' ranged attacks. The blood rain stance combines well with blood wind ricochet, but it truly comes into its own when combined with a blood storm strike. Adopt the blood rain stance and use blood storm as soon as most of your enemies are within range. After striking every enemy on the field of battle, you can maintain the blood rain stance to continue dealing damage to them while you focus your melee attacks on a single target.

### ADVANCEMENT

Many students of the bloodstorm style learn their art covertly, since the githyanki adepts who originally created this ancient tradition seek to kill anyone outside their sword-cult who passes on its secrets. However, one notable group practices its style in the open: the mercenary Bloodstorm Guild. These skilled warriors train any suitable applicant who asks them, in exchange for an oath of loyalty and a promise to never reveal the secrets of the technique to any who have not sworn fealty to the guild.

Once you become a bloodstorm blade, you might or might not try to keep that fact a secret. If you belong to the guild, the githyanki are not likely to single you out—the githyanki blademasters usually keep to an uneasy truce with the Bloodstorm Guild. If you learn your abilities from some other practitioner, you might find yourself dogged by githyanki blademasters intent on expunging all knowledge of this hidden tradition outside their own race, beginning with you. Of course, in combat you make full use of your abilities regardless of who might be looking on, but you rarely go out of your way to advertise your knowledge to the general public. You never know who might be watching.

Your bloodstorm blade abilities lend themselves to mastery of a single melee weapon. Feats such as Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization thus apply to both your melee and thrown weapon attacks. Even so, when you have the opportunity to take a feat, consider feats that improve your ranged capabilities, such as Far Shot and Precise Shot.

### RESOURCES

As a bloodstorm blade of the guild, your fellow members know you to be competent and reasonably trustworthy. Most members of the Bloodstorm Guild are helpful to you in whatever manner they can manage. However, more than a few members of the guild pay little heed to their loyalty oaths, and do as they please after they master the secrets of the technique. You can't always count on your fellows.

Other bloodstorm blades can often rely on the help of other illicit members of the class (especially those whom they trained, or those who trained them) to hide from or repel attacks from the githyanki. Even bloodstorm blades with a long history of hatred for one another band together against the threat of the githyanki blademasters.

## BLOODSTORM BLADES IN THE WORLD

*"Like storms, they provide no warning. When you hear their thunder, the lightning has already struck."*

—Thaku Alzull, hobgoblin warblade

Bloodstorm blades and their githyanki nemeses can fill any of several roles in your campaign. Bloodstorm blades might form a loose association of heroic individuals seeking to share their knowledge despite the murderous attacks of the githyanki sword-cult. Alternatively, the practitioners outside the Bloodstorm Guild might be wicked individuals who stole the special knowledge that should have remained in the oath-bounded hands of the guild. Your campaign could instead host a blending of these ideas with virtuous and villainous bloodstorm blades and githyanki blademasters on three sides of a morally murky secret war. If you would rather not use the Bloodstorm Guild and the secrecy of the bloodstorm style, you can simply adopt the bloodstorm blade prestige class as a way to include a cool villain.

### ORGANIZATION

Not long ago, a secret society or sword-cult of githyanki warblades had sole possession of the bloodstorm techniques. Devoted to study and mastery of the Iron Heart discipline, the githyanki developed the signature abilities of the style over the course of generations. Naturally, the githyanki saw no reason to share their secret knowledge with anyone, and those who pried too much about it found themselves facing its lethal practitioners.

Then, about forty years ago, the secret got out. Some say a member betrayed the sword-cult by teaching the bloodstorm style to an outsider. Others say a brave human warblade stole scripts detailing the maneuvers and learned the art from them. Regardless of how the githyanki lost it, knowledge of the bloodstorm blade style spread like wildfire, and despite efforts by the sword-cult to quash knowledge and eliminate those who practice its techniques, many who study the Iron Heart discipline choose to risk the githyanki wrath by becoming bloodstorm blades.

The only nongith organization of martial adepts openly practicing this style is the Bloodstorm Guild. Founded by a renowned human warblade named Treyana di Vrada shortly after the secrets of the style got out, the Guild is a loose association of mercenaries and sellswords bound together by some simple, nonbinding vows. Bloodstorm Guild members rarely serve employers as a group, and instead tend to hire themselves out as specialists, enforcers, and bodyguards. Guild members in the same region often frequent the same taverns, arming grounds, and training arenas, and they might pass news of potential employment to one another. The guild has no true hierarchy of leadership, although more junior members usually defer to proven blades (those with more levels in this prestige class). Before a bloodstorm blade consents to instruct a potential student in the secrets of the technique, he usually confers with other senior blades in the area.

Characters who master this style without seeking out the Bloodstorm Guild usually do so through study of black-market texts describing its use, or by studying for a time with another bloodstorm blade. These master–student relationships don't often last long, but usually result in lifelong friendship and loyalty. Many teachers eventually build up a network of former students, and students of their students, who will answer a call for support or assistance of any kind.

## NPC REACTIONS

Martial adepts who have heard of the bloodstorm technique regard all its practitioners with a little awe, but this attitude doesn't influence their reaction upon meeting bloodstorm blades. Bloodstorm blades typically regard one another with a friendly attitude. Githyanki warblades are hostile to all bloodstorm blades who do not belong to the guild, but are merely unfriendly to guild members. A years-long feud between the gith sword-cult and Treyana di Vrada and her followers left many dead on both sides, and the githyanki have grudgingly allowed a truce of sorts . . . at least until they have the strength to eradicate the nongith practitioners of the art in one swift strike.

## BLOODSTORM BLADE LORE

Characters with ranks in Martial Lore can research bloodstorm blades to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** Bloodstorm blades have amazing powers with thrown weapons. Many belong to the Bloodstorm Guild, a mercenary fellowship of sorts.

**DC 15:** The techniques used by bloodstorm blades were known exclusively to the githyanki up until a few decades ago. Now scripts describing the style are available only on the black market.

**DC 20:** The secretive githyanki blademasters are responsible for the attacks on bloodstorm blades and those who traffic with them. The githyanki created the style and now seek to suppress knowledge of it.

A PC who wishes to learn about specific bloodstorm blades or the Bloodstorm Guild will have a difficult time. He must make quiet inquiries at martial adept training halls and places frequented by those with connections to the black market, and then succeed on a DC 20 Gather Information check. Publicly asking about bloodstorm blades likely results in the PC being rebuffed, and such queries might attract the attention of a vigilant githyanki blademaster.

## BLOODSTORM BLADES IN THE GAME

If one of your players decides to play a bloodstorm blade, the prestige class should fit in as easily as any martial adept class. You can make the Bloodstorm Guild or the githyanki blademasters as large or small a part of your campaign as you like.

If the githyanki sword-cult becomes a part of your campaign, be sure that its involvement doesn't put too much of a spotlight on the bloodstorm blade. Too many githyanki attacks against the PCs will grow onerous, and the cult isn't large enough to repeatedly expend the lives of its members trying to kill a PC. Instead of adventures centered on the githyanki, consider having an NPC member of the Bloodstorm Guild occasionally help or advise the PCs as they go about other adventures.

If a player decides to be a member of the Bloodstorm Guild, you can use rumors of black market texts describing the bloodstorm techniques or githyanki assassin teams as adventure hooks.

## ADAPTATION

Bloodstorm blades need not be attached to a fellowship of sellswords or a secret githyanki cult. The class's techniques might be a development of the Iron Heart discipline that anyone can learn, or the fighting style might have been discovered and used by another race.

For example, you could decide that the abilities of this prestige class are used only by a group of halflings who are specialists with the sling. Calling themselves stonestorm strikers, members of this prestige class gain Quick Draw instead of Throw Anything and have the ability to load a sling with one hand as a free action instead of returning attacks. The other abilities of the class would work with sling attacks instead of thrown weapons.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

The PCs can encounter a bloodstorm blade as an ally or enemy in any manner you see fit. Bloodstorm blades might act as cohorts of a foe, or one could be the main villain in an adventure. The heroes might discover a githyanki text of bloodstorm knowledge during the course of their adventures, only to find that the githyanki blademasters will do anything to get the text back.

**EL 15:** Varand Thunderhand is a member of the Bloodstorm Guild, but his actions hide a terrible secret: He is a spy for the githyanki blademasters. He betrays other bloodstorm blades to the githyanki, hoping to use the fanatical blademasters to remove rivals from the guild and pave the way for his eventual takeover. Varand intends to rule the guild with an iron fist, commanding a small army of loyal blades that he can use however he sees fit.

If a PC is a member of the guild, Varand approaches the party hoping to gain aid in exploring a forlorn citadel, in whose vaults bloodstorm texts are supposedly hidden. If the PCs help him, Varand sets them up by arranging for a team of githyanki warblades to ambush them. He intends to give the characters and the texts (if they're even present) to the githyanki, and keep the rest of the booty garnered from the adventure.

**VARAND THUNDERHAND** **CR 15**

Dwarf fighter 2/warblade 5/bloodstorm blade 8
CE Medium humanoid
**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot +11
**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant, Gnome

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**AC** 25, touch 13, flat-footed 25; +4 AC against giants, uncanny dodge
(+2 Dex, +9 armor, +3 shield, +1 deflection)
**hp** 160 (14 HD)
**Resist** stability (+4 against bull rush and trip)
**Fort** +18 (+20 against poison), **Ref** +7, **Will** +5; +2 on saves against spells and spell-like effects

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**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)
**Melee** *+2 dwarven waraxe* +24/+19/+14 (1d10+11/×3) or
**Melee** spiked gauntlet +20 (1d6+5)
**Ranged** *+2 dwarven waraxe* +24/+19/+14 (1d10+11/×3) with thunderous throw and lightning ricochet
**Base Atk** +15; **Grp** +20
**Atk Options** Blade Meditation (Iron Heart), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, +1 on attacks against orcs and goblinoids, martial throw, returning attacks, thunderous throw
**Special Actions** blood rain, blood rain, blood wind ricochet, eye of the storm, lightning ricochet
**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin +2, potion of cure light wounds, potion of heroism*
**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 10th):
*Stances*—punishing stance (1st), stonefoot stance (1st)
*Strikes*—disarming strike† (2nd), exorcism of steel† (DC 20, 3rd), mountain hammer† (2nd), steel wind (1st), steely strike† (1st), stone bones (1st)
*Disciplines:* Iron Heart, Stone Dragon
† Readied maneuver

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**Abilities** Str 20, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8
**SQ** stonecunning (*PH* 15), weapon aptitude
**Feats** Blade Meditation (Iron Heart)*, Far Shot, Greater Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Greater Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe)$^{B}$, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot$^{B}$, Power Attack$^{B}$, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Throw Anything$^{B}$, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe)$^{B}$, Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe)$^{B}$
*New feat described on page 28
**Skills** Balance +24, Climb +7, Concentration +10, Intimidate +9, Jump +8, Martial Lore +6, Spot +11, Tumble +18
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+4 breastplate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 dwarven waraxe,* spiked gauntlets, *belt of giant strength +4, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +1, amulet of health +2*

# DEEPSTONE SENTINEL

*"I almost felt pity for Urthrad's orcs as they charged our defensive line. Almost."*
—Orros the Bloodyhanded, sentinel of the Northern Reach

The Stone Dragon discipline traces its roots back to an ancient order of dwarves that used the power of the earth to enhance their combat style. A deepstone sentinel immerses himself in these ancient teachings to link himself to the power of stone. Most deepstone sentinels use this power in the defense of their fellow dwarves, though some take a more active approach battling the enemies of their people. In combat, a deepstone sentinel is a living mountain, a stony redoubt that provides shelter to his allies while crashing like an avalanche upon his enemies. The ground shifts and churns under his feet. One moment he stands atop a small, earthen mound that blocks his enemies—the next he summons an earthquake to knock his foes to the ground.

## BECOMING A DEEPSTONE SENTINEL

Most dwarves who follow the tradition of the deepstone sentinel begin as crusaders or warblades. Fighters, paladins, and other martial-oriented characters might also find the class to their liking; typically, such characters multiclass (often as rogues or scouts) to meet the skill requirement. On rare occasions, dwarf monks take up the mantle of deepstone sentinel, often moving on to crusader, swordsage, or warblade upon completing progression in the class.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Race:** Dwarf.
**Base Attack Bonus:** +10.
**Skills:** Balance 13 ranks.
**Feats:** Power Attack or Stone Power*.
**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know at least two Stone Dragon maneuvers and one Stone Dragon stance.
*New feat described on page 32.

## CLASS FEATURES

The class allows you to continue to learn new maneuvers, likely from the Stone Dragon discipline. It also grants special combat prowess when utilizing Stone Dragon maneuvers.

**Maneuvers:** At each odd-numbered level, you gain a new maneuver known from the Stone Dragon discipline. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full deepstone sentinel levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 3rd level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Mountain Fortress Stance (Su):** As a novice deepstone sentinel, you learn to make yourself as impenetrable as a mountain fortress. This ability is a key component of this prestige class's combat abilities. While you are in a Stone Dragon stance, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of mountain fortress stance. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the Stone Dragon stance, or as described below. You can also stop using mountain fortress stance and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

When you use this ability, you can choose to create a fortress of earth or rock, provided you are standing on earth, stone, rock, or a worked surface such as a cobblestone street or a flagstone floor (as long as natural earth or rock is no more than 1 foot below you). The square (or squares) that you occupy forms a pillar of earth or rock 5 feet tall, with you on top. Each square adjacent to you is buckled and steeply sloped, becoming difficult terrain. Any creature that attempts to enter or leave one of these squares must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone in the last square of the area it occupied. Creatures that ignore difficult terrain automatically succeed on this check, and flying creatures are unaffected. Creatures with four or more legs or the stability racial trait gain a +4 bonus on this Balance check.

You retain the benefit of mountain fortress stance until you end your Stone Dragon stance or move more than 5 feet in a round. You are unaffected by the difficult terrain you create with this ability. If you move only 5 feet in a round, the pillar of earth you have created moves with you, creating new squares of difficult terrain in every square adjacent to your new position. If creatures occupy those newly adjacent squares, they do not need to immediately make Balance

**Table 5–3: The Deepstone Sentinel Hit Die: d10**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +0 | 1 | 0 | Mountain fortress stance, *passwall* |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +0 | 0 | 0 | Crashing mountain juggernaut |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 1 | Indomitable redoubt |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | Stone curse, dragon's tooth |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 0 | Awaken the stone dragon |

**Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Concentration, Craft, Intimidate, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Listen, Martial Lore*, Spot.
*New skill described on page 28.

checks as described above. However, if on their turn they attempt to leave the area of difficult terrain, they are affected by mountain fortress stance as normal, and squares that are no longer adjacent to you return to their natural state. If you move more than 5 feet in a round while using mountain fortress stance, the effect ends, and the ground immediately returns to normal.

**Passwall (Sp):** You can use *passwall* once per day per class level as a spell-like ability. Your caster level is equal to your deepstone sentinel class level.

**Crashing Mountain Juggernaut (Su):** Beginning at 2nd level, if you start your turn with mountain fortress stance active, as a full-round action you can end the Stone Dragon stance you initiated to gain the benefit of this ability. When you do so, the hill you created with mountain fortress stance suddenly sinks, sending any foes standing in squares adjacent to you crashing to the ground. In addition, you tumble down the crumbling hill like a living avalanche.

When you use this ability, all creatures within the area of difficult terrain created by your mountain fortress stance must make DC 15 Balance checks or fall prone. The bonus for stability or having extra legs does not apply. In addition, you can use a charge to attack an enemy as part of this ability's activation. If your attack is successful, it deals an extra 2d6 points of damage owing to the momentum you gain as you hurtle down your temporary hill and slam into your opponent.

You cannot activate mountain fortress stance on the same turn in which you use this ability.

**Indomitable Redoubt (Ex):** Once you attain 3rd level, while you are in mountain fortress stance, you can also initiate and gain the benefit of one additional Stone Dragon stance. This can be the stance you entered to initially activate mountain fortress stance, or another Stone Dragon stance you know. You must otherwise follow all the normal rules for entering and maintaining a stance.

**Stone Curse (Su):** From 4th level on, you can strike an opponent and channel the leaden weight of the earth into its arms and legs. For a brief moment, it labors in vain, unable to move under the crushing burden you impose.

As an immediate action, you can force an opponent you hit with a melee attack to make a successful Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or become unable to move for 1 round. The creature's speed for all movement modes except flight drops to 0 feet. A creature's fly speed remains unchanged. You must choose to use this ability after successfully attacking an opponent but before rolling damage.

**Dragon's Tooth (Su):** From 4th level on, as a standard action, you can cause a pillar of stone to erupt from the earth within 60 feet of you. The pillar occupies one square and is 5 or 10 feet tall (your choice). You can call forth a stone pillar only from natural, unworked earth or stone. A creature standing in the square must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or be knocked prone. You can dismiss a pillar you created as a standard action, but otherwise the pillar remains where you called it forth.

**Awaken the Stone Dragon (Su):** At 5th level, you can cause a localized earthquake to rumble through the ground around you. Through your study of Stone Dragon techniques and your strong connection to elemental earth, you can awaken the slumbering wrath of stone to send your enemies tumbling to the ground. The earth churns, rocks explode into cutting shards, and the ground rebels against your foes.

Once per encounter as a swift action, you cause the ground around you to shudder and churn as if rocked by an earthquake. All enemies within a 60-foot radius must make successful Reflex saves (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or take 12d6 points of damage and fall prone. A successful save allows an opponent to take half damage and remain standing. Improved stability (such as a dwarf's racial ability) does not help a creature avoid being knocked prone by this ability.

## PLAYING A DEEPSTONE SENTINEL

A deepstone sentinel embodies many classic dwarf traits. As a sentinel, you are quiet, slow to anger, taciturn, and blunt. You prefer to let your enemies come to you, rather than charge forward and expose your position. A steady, reliable advance works much better than a wild, risky gambit. Like the earth beneath your feet, you are reliable, steady, and enduring. Other warriors might rely on flashy gambits and fluid tactics, but you have little use for such stratagems. You are the rock that endures, the impenetrable wall of defense that withstands the enemy's assault. When it is time to attack, you unleash your fury in an avalanche of steel. Until then, you let your foes waste their efforts against your sturdy armor and thick shield.

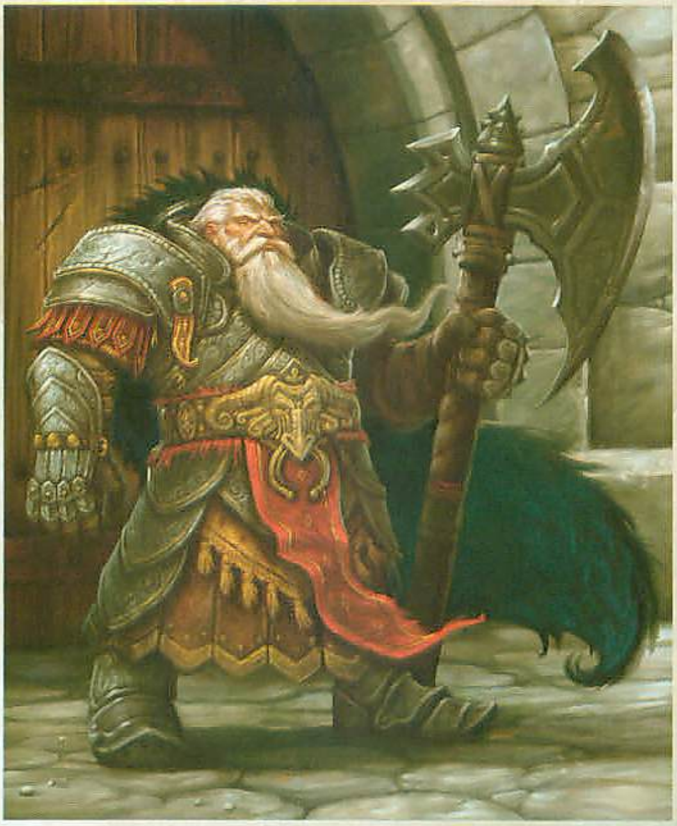
### COMBAT

A deepstone sentinel is, in essence, a mobile defensive position. Once you enter mountain fortress stance, you form a useful barrier against enemies who seek to skirt around you and attack your allies. Once you gain the indomitable redoubt ability, you can combine mountain fortress stance with a stance from the Stone Dragon discipline, such as roots of the mountain, making you nearly impossible to circumvent or overcome in battle.

Generally speaking, as a deepstone sentinel you should focus on staying in front of your companions. In most cases, slower monsters such as giants, and other melee combatants should have to fight through you before they can attack your allies. Your ability to stop a foe dead in his tracks with stone curse, particularly if you wield a reach weapon, makes any attempt to slip around you a risky gamble at best. You excel at controlling the battlefield. Look to create chokepoints that force an enemy to enter and remain in the area of your abilities.

### ADVANCEMENT

Joining the deepstone sentinels is a difficult task, since a prospective candidate must not only display great skill at arms but also master difficult mystic secrets of the earth itself. The sentinels tend to resist training adventurers and other lone wolves. In battle, the sentinels are expected to form a mighty defensive bulwark against more numerous enemies of the dwarves, such as orcs, goblins, and ogres. A sentinel intent on learning the secrets of this order, then striking out on his own, is a poor investment in the order's eyes. An adventuring dwarf who becomes a sentinel must prove himself in battle, usually by rendering a great service to a dwarf clan home, or by showing that his adventures directly aid the dwarf people.



*Karthak the Indomitable, a deepstone sentinel*

Once you become a sentinel, you can expect most dwarves to treat you with respect and admiration. Yet, these accolades come with expectations that you will always fight hard and true for the dwarf people. The sentinels have never broken and run from a battle until their allies have all safely withdrawn. Legend has it that the first sentinel to break this tradition will be struck dead by Moradin himself. Whether this tale is true or not, the implication is plain as day. A sentinel would die before abandoning his allies.

As you gain levels in this prestige class, look for feats and abilities that increase your reach, make it easier for you to handle crowds of opponents, and boost your AC. You can expect your enemies to target you for destruction quickly, since as long as you remain standing, you prevent them from harming your friends.

### RESOURCES

You can expect a place to sleep and more than enough food and drink from any dwarf clan home. The sentinels maintain outposts in most major dwarf cities and citadels built near orc, goblin, and giant hordes. As an adventurer, your fellow sentinels are likely eager for news of the outside world and of the rest of the order when you visit these bastions of dwarven strength. If the dwarves face a threat of any sort, you will be expected to contribute to a solution. Although this can be a burden, your position as a respected figure also makes it easy for you to sway dwarf leaders and organize your people in the face of a threat. If you advise the dwarf king to send a raiding party to slip into an orc stronghold and slay the red dragon that leads the tribes, you can expect smiths to forge sturdy armor and deadly weapons for the raiding party, while clerics of Moradin and dwarf mages craft scrolls and potions that the group might need.

## DEEPSTONE SENTINELS IN THE WORLD

*"When the sentinels came through the east gate, we halted our efforts to reinforce the northern walls. Our fortifications had arrived."*

—General Rurik Axethrower, IX Rockhome Legion

Deepstone sentinels tend to remain within the dwarf holds they have sworn to defend. Typically, only a great threat to the dwarf people, a quest important to their continuing prosperity, or a threat from a distant land can cause one to become an adventurer. A PC dwarf might strive to join the order to prove himself to his people, or the righteous nature of his quest might compel the sentinels to offer him training in their mystic fighting style.

### ORGANIZATION

The deepstone sentinels practice their fighting art in vaults hidden far beneath dwarfstrongholds. Beneath the deepest mines, below the winding passages that lead to distant strongholds and subterranean caverns, the sentinels have small, austere academies where they train the next generation of sentinels, practice their fighting styles, and bury their dead. Tradition holds that many of a citadel's most important treasures are stored here, both to keep them hidden from the outside world and to place them under the trustworthy protection of the sentinels.

*Illus. by H. Lyon*

A deepstone sentinel is a member of an elite fighting unit, one that serves as both the first and last line of defense for the dwarves. In battle, they are the dauntless core that the dwarves rally around. When orcs and giants threaten a dwarf stronghold, the sentinels must stand resolute to protect key passages, tunnels, and other entrances. If the sentinels fall, the stronghold is often lost.

### NPC REACTIONS

Dwarves have a natural inclination to respect and admire deepstone sentinels, since they are seen as embodiments of three dwarven virtues—courage, loyalty, and wisdom in the lore of earth and stone. Nondwarves tend to know little of the sentinels, because they rarely trumpet their talents or show off their abilities outside combat. Orcs and giants hate sentinels, but they are forced to respect a sentinel's fighting ability.

## DEEPSTONE SENTINEL LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (history) can research deepstone sentinels to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** Deepstone sentinels are dwarf warriors who are renowned for breaking enemy charges and forming a dauntless line in battle.

**DC 15:** The sentinels have the ability to control the earth. At their command, they cause the ground to become broken and sloped, making a charge against them almost impossible.

**DC 20:** Sentinels practice a strange form of martial magic by tapping into the power of the earth. They cause the ground to shake and disruptive terrain to form. When you fight a sentinel, you fight the earth itself.

Any PC who has friendly relations with a local dwarf stronghold can likely gain an audience with a sentinel's commander. Sentinels tend to avoid contact with outsiders, for fear of mingling with spies and others who seek to learn their weaknesses or plot against them.

## DEEPSTONE SENTINELS IN THE GAME

Deepstone sentinels are relatively easy to add into the game world, given that they are secretive, few in number, and confined to dwarf strongholds. A dwarf PC might never have heard of this order simply because the citadel where he grew up lacked such an elite fighting unit. The sentinels could also be a relatively new development in your world, particularly if the abilities outlined in this book are a new form of martial art.

Dwarf characters who rely on heavy armor are a good match for this class. The armor helps turn a dwarf into a tremendous obstacle for enemies without penalizing his speed.

### ADAPTATION

The key concept of the deepstone sentinel is manipulation of the terrain on which the character is fighting. This class provides the mechanics for an interesting opponent, since it gives melee-oriented characters access to abilities that would normally be reserved for spellcasters. An order of evil stone giants or fire giants with access to these abilities would make a daunting opponent. You could also change this class into a druidic warrior or wild elf forest sentinel who creates an *entangle* effect when he enters the basic stance of the class in an area of natural vegetation, and redesign the remaining class abilities in accordance with this new concept.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

The PCs are likely to meet deepstone sentinels as allies, particularly if they fight against giants and orcs. Should the PCs undertake a quest for the dwarves, a sentinel might accompany them to aid them in their task. In any major battle involving dwarves, a unit of sentinels could be present.

**EL 13:** Karthak the Indomitable is a rare deepstone sentinel who wanders the land as an adventurer. His home was destroyed by a rampaging dragon that now lairs within the halls of his former home. A sentinel's training hall, located far beneath the dwarf citadel, contains a number of powerful magic items that the dragon seeks. Karthak needs adventurers willing to help him venture into the ruins to slay the dragon, along with its demonic and draconic allies, and recover the artifacts before the dragon gets its claws on them.

#### KARTHAK THE INDOMITABLE CR 13

Male dwarf fighter 10/deepstone sentinel 3
AL LN Medium humanoid
**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
**Languages** Common, Dwarven

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**AC** 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21; +4 AC against giants (+11 armor)
**hp** 115 (13 HD)
**Resist** stability (+4 against bull rush and trip)
**Fort** +14 (+16 against poison), **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +2 on saves against spells and spell-like effects

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**Speed** 20 ft.
**Melee** *+2 keen greataxe* +21/+16/+11 (1d12+11/×3)
**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +13 (1d8/19–20)
**Base Atk** +12; **Grp** +17
**Atk Options** Power Attack, +1 on attacks against orcs and goblinoids, indomitable redoubt
**Special Actions** crashing mountain juggernaut, mountain fortress stance, *passwall* 1/day

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**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 8th):
*Stances*—stonefoot stance (1st)
*Strikes*—bone crusher (3rd), charging minotaur (1st), mountain hammer (2nd), overwhelming mountain strike (4th), stone bones (2nd)
*Disciplines:* Stone Dragon
Each of Karthak's maneuvers can be initiated once per encounter, with no recovery possible.

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**Abilities** Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 8
**SQ** stonecunning (*PH* 15)
**Feats** Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe)$^B$, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Stance$^B$ (stonefoot stance), Martial Study$^B$ (charging minotaur), Martial Study (mountain hammer)$^B$, Martial Study (stone bones), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe)$^B$, Weapon Specialization (greataxe)$^B$
**Skills** Balance +10
**Possessions** *+3 full plate, +2 keen greataxe*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *+1 cloak of resistance*

## ETERNAL BLADE

*"You face three millennia of fighting skill. Perhaps you should take a moment and reconsider your decision."*

—Aedar Windblade, eternal blade of the Hidden Grove

An eternal blade is an elf who learns a variety of exotic fighting maneuvers with the aid and advice of the spirit of a mighty, ancient elf warrior. The eternal blades once swore to defend the elves against the forces of evil, but in ages past, the blades turned against each other, causing a schism that echoes to the present day. Some eternal blades embrace the responsibilities that come with this class's training. Others seek to use their talents to further their own ends.

The eternal blades were once champions of Corellon Larethian. They served as guardians of the people, defenders of the faith, and wardens of the ancient elf forests. The blade guides, the spirits of ancient eternal blades who serve as advisors and teachers to the current generation of warriors, kept the blades on the path of righteousness, preserved their teachings across each generation, and helped guide them in protecting elfkind. For thousands of years, the eternal blades beat back goblin invasions, would-be conquerors, and other threats. From the lone blade who slew an ogre that threatened a village, to the mighty general who commanded hundreds of these warriors in battle, the eternal blades fought evil wherever and whenever it threatened their kin.

Alas, all good things must come to an end. In time, the eternal blades grew arrogant and aloof. After all, they had provided safety and security to the elf realms on countless occasions. If they kept the elves safe, did it not follow that their brethren owed them something in return? A growing faction within the blades believed that the eternal blades were the only ones fit to rule the elves. Even worse, a number of the blade guides turned to evil and abandoned the order. In time, the eternal blades fell into disfavor. More and more elves refused the blade guides' call. Today, the order is a mere shadow of its former glory, although legends tell of a heroic warrior who will one day lead the order back to prominence. The remaining blades hope that this triumph lies in their future, but many elves believe the story to be nothing but wishful thinking.

## BECOMING AN ETERNAL BLADE

The elves hold that one does not choose to become an eternal blade. Rather, a blade guide, the spiritual companion to an eternal blade, chooses a young elf to walk this path and manifests in a young elf's dreams long before the child is ready to train as a warrior. Sometimes, these manifestations are merely flights of fancy. Other times, they are heralds of things to come. Most elves who become eternal blades begin their careers as warblades. Rangers, fighters, paladins, and barbarians who learn maneuvers from the Diamond Mind or Devoted Spirit disciplines also commonly enter this prestige class.

In a few cases, a blade guide appears to an elf late in life. This occurrence is rare, and it usually signals an elf warrior who is destined for great things. Legends tell that only five elves have been selected in this manner. Each of them became a great hero who led the blades to a great victory against seemingly impossible odds.

### Entry Requirements

**Race:** Elf.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +10.

**Feats:** Weapon Focus (any).

**Martial Maneuvers:** Any two Devoted Spirit or Diamond Mind maneuvers.

## CLASS FEATURES

As an eternal blade, you fight and train with the assistance of a blade guide, the incorporeal spirit of an ancient member of this order. The guide is similar to a familiar in that it confers benefits to you when you are in close proximity to it. A blade guide also increases your flexibility, since it can teach you new maneuvers and lend you the wisdom of its combat experience.

**Maneuvers:** At each odd-numbered level, you gain a new maneuver known from the Devoted Spirit, Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, or White Raven discipline. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full eternal blade levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 3rd level, 6th level, and 9th level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Stances Known:** At 5th level, you learn a new martial stance from the Devoted Spirit, Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, or White Raven disciplines. You must meet a stance's prerequisite to learn it.

**Blade Guide (Su):** You gain a blade guide, the spirit of an ancient member of the eternal blades, that provides you with advice, tactical assistance, and training. The blade guide is incorporeal, has hit points equal to your own, and is size Fine. Its AC is 18, and it can fly with perfect maneuverability and a speed of 30 feet.

If your blade guide is destroyed, or it somehow moves out of your line of effect, it reappears in your space in 1d6 rounds. The guide is the physical manifestation of a spirit that resides on the Outer Planes. Destroying a blade guide's form merely severs its link to the Material Plane for a short time.

A blade guide appears as a mote of white energy. It uses your senses to see and hear, and communicates with you by telepathy. Thus, it cannot interact with objects and creatures that you cannot see. Your blade guide is meant to aid you in combat, not serve as a scout.

Sometimes, your guide appears as a ghostly image of how it looked in life. This manifestation requires tremendous effort, and your guide chooses to attempt it only when it must communicate with others under dire circumstances. When a blade guide manifests, it can speak with others as normal. A blade guide can appear in this manner for up to 10 minutes per day. While it manifests, you lose access to your blade guide and any class abilities that require it to function.

If a blade guide must make a saving throw, it uses your save modifier. It lacks skill ranks, feats, Hit Dice, and ability score modifiers.

**Eternal Training (Ex):** Your blade guide offers you intense martial training based on its years of combat experience in

**TABLE 5–4: THE ETERNAL BLADE HIT DIE: D10**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Blade guide, eternal training 1/day |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Guided strike |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | Armored uncanny dodge, eternal training 2/day |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Eternal knowledge |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | Eternal training 3/day |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Defensive insight |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Eternal training 4/day |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Tactical insight |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | Eternal training 5/day |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +3 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Island in time |

**Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level):** Climb, Concentration, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Jump, Martial Lore*, Ride, Sense Motive, Tumble.

*New skill described on page 28.

mortal life. Each night when you enter trance, your blade guide enters your mind. In your dreams, the two of you spar and practice across a hundred different battlefields. You fight ogres, trolls, and other monsters that your guide creates from the ether of dreams. You practice maneuvers beyond your normal capacity. With each night that passes, you become more and more skilled in the fighting arts.

Once per day, you can draw upon this nightly training to aid you in a single battle. You can choose one of two benefits. Each of these benefits lasts for one encounter.

You gain an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence bonus (if any) on attack rolls and damage rolls against creatures of a single type. If you select humanoid or outsider as the type, you must also choose a subtype.

Alternatively, you can gain the use of one maneuver from the Diamond Mind or Devoted Spirit discipline. You must meet the prerequisite for this maneuver as normal. A crusader/eternal guardian who selects this option is immediately granted this maneuver. A maneuver gained with eternal training can be recovered with your normal recovery method (if you have one) during the encounter, but knowledge of the maneuver fades immediately after the encounter ends.

You gain an additional use per day of this ability at 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level. Even if you have multiple uses of this ability per day, you can use this ability only once per encounter. You can use this ability only while you have access to your blade guide.

**Guided Strike (Ex):** Your blade guide assesses your enemies, seeking out weak points in their armor and offering you advice on where and how to strike. Drawing on its experience and keen eye for strategy and tactics, your guide grants you advice that can render even the most daunting foe impotent.

Beginning at 2nd level, as a swift action, you can confer with your guide concerning a single foe that you face. For the rest of your turn, you automatically overcome your foe's damage reduction, if any. You can use this ability only while you have access to your blade guide.

**Armored Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** So long as your blade guide is active, you gain the benefit of uncanny dodge starting at 3rd level. See the rogue class feature (*PH* 50). If you already have uncanny dodge, you instead gain improved uncanny dodge. If you lose access to your blade guide, you lose this ability until your guide returns. You can use uncanny dodge or improved uncanny dodge even if you wear medium or heavy armor.

**Eternal Knowledge (Ex):** Your blade guide is an expert in a variety of areas. In addition to the tactical and strategic guidance it offers, it also grants you access to great stores of lore. From history to planar phenomena, your guide has seen almost everything.

When you attain 4th level, your blade guide can make Knowledge checks with a bonus equal to your eternal blade level + your Int modifier. When you first gain this ability, you can select two areas of knowledge. For each additional two levels you gain in the eternal blade prestige class (at 6th, 8th, and 10th level), your guide gains access to another area of knowledge.

**Defensive Insight (Ex):** Your blade guide's advice and insights grant you an intellectual edge in combat, but there is a fine line between knowing how to do something and executing it in combat. If you take a moment to focus yourself, you can apply your knowledge to the situation at hand.

Beginning at 6th level, as a swift action, you can size up an opponent and use your tactical knowledge against him. You gain a dodge bonus to AC equal to your Intelligence bonus (if any) against a single foe of your choice until the beginning of your next turn. You can use this ability only while you have access to your blade guide.

**Tactical Insight (Ex):** Although you might be young by the elves' reckoning, your blade guide lends you the experience and wisdom of one who has fought battles across countless fields. In almost any situation you face, you have the experience, tactical lore, and knowledge needed to defeat your enemy.

From 8th level on, as a swift action, you can assess a tactical situation and make an attack that improves the attacks of your allies. For the rest of your turn, any opponent you hit with a melee attack takes a penalty to AC equal to your Intelligence bonus (if any) for 1 round. This penalty applies only to attacks made by your allies. If you lose access to your blade guide, you lose this ability until it returns.

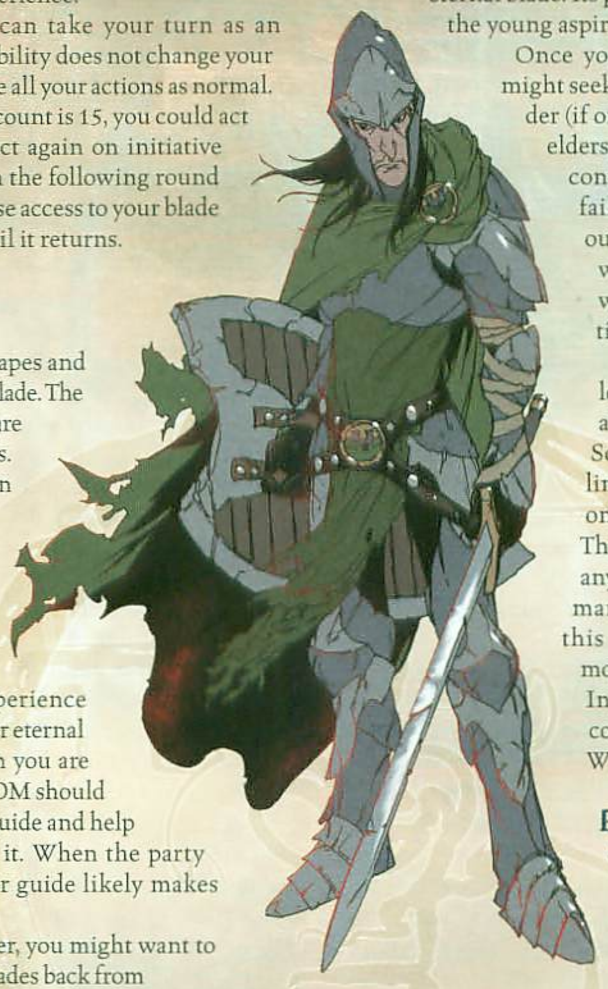
**Island in Time (Ex):** At 10th level, you can throw yourself into a fight under your blade guide's careful direction. You meld with it, allowing it to control your actions while you draw upon its vast combat experience.

Once per encounter, you can take your turn as an immediate action. Using this ability does not change your initiative count, and you can use all your actions as normal. For example, if your initiative count is 15, you could act normally, use this ability to act again on initiative count 14, then act normally on the following round on initiative count 15. If you lose access to your blade guide, you lose this ability until it returns.

## PLAYING AN ETERNAL BLADE

A blade guide, in large part, shapes and molds the persona of an eternal blade. The guide acts as it did in life. Some are gruff, demanding perfectionists. Others are quiet and withdrawn masters who prefer to let their combat expertise speak for them. Many eternal blades get along fine with their guides, but some bicker and argue. In particular, a blade guide's centuries of experience sometimes clash with a younger eternal blade's thirst for action. When you are playing an eternal blade, your DM should take on the role of your blade guide and help you form a relationship with it. When the party stops to discuss its plans, your guide likely makes its opinions known.

As a member of a dying order, you might want to strive to help pull the eternal blades back from the brink of oblivion. Remember, every action you take reflects on your order as a whole.



*Aedar the eternal blade*

Illus. by K. Andrasofszky

### COMBAT

In combat, you are a war leader, a central focus of the group's melee resources. You must wade into combat to prevent threatening monsters from getting to your group's vulnerable spellcasters. The key to your class abilities lies in your talent to focus yourself for one encounter. A standard fighter might have more feats, and thus do more damage with his typical swing, but your abilities allow you to push yourself ahead of the curve. With judicious use of your eternal training, defensive insight, and tactical abilities, you can deal impressive amounts of damage, absorb attacks, or set up an ally's deadly attacks.

### ADVANCEMENT

As noted above, you might not have selected this path so much as it chose you. Becoming an eternal blade does not involve an application process, an interview, or a test. Instead, the blade guides select elf warriors based on a nebulous criterion. Sometimes, they see a spark for heroism and self-sacrifice, and wish to cultivate it. In other cases, a blade guide cannot guess how it came to be linked to a specific person. All a guide knows is that its charge was chosen to become an eternal blade. Its place is not to ask why, but to guide the young aspirant unfailingly.

Once you become an eternal blade, you might seek out the nearest redoubt of this order (if one still stands) and confer with its elders. Some eternal blades never make contact with the order, seeing it as a failure. Rather, they seek to strike out on their own. Perhaps a mighty warrior will someday pull these wanderers together into an effective fighting force.

When selecting feats and skills, look to abilities that function in a wide range of circumstances. Some of your class features have a limited number of uses, or function only when you use a swift action. This puts them in competition with any boosts you might learn through martial maneuvers. Don't increase this competition by acquiring many more abilities that require actions. Instead, look for feats that provide a consistent, constant benefit, such as Weapon Specialization.

### RESOURCES

Once, the eternal blades had a tremendous range of resources to draw upon. Sadly, those glory days are gone. You can expect little help from other eternal blades in the form of food, shelter, weapons, and armor. Most will gladly stand beside you in battle, but the order is simply too weak to marshal an extensive store of material resources. You are welcome in the few remaining blade-held castles, but even these offer little comfort, with their crumbling walls and faded glory.

## ETERNAL BLADES IN THE WORLD

*"We retreated merely to ascertain the enemy's strength. These upstart elves will be defeated ere the sun rises again, I swear by my life."*

—Tergin Bloodoath, battle herald of Hextor (deceased)

The eternal blades comprise a small, dying group that rarely ventures far beyond elf lands. The difficulty of introducing a member of this prestige class into a campaign depends on when a player decides to take up the class. A character built from 1st level to enter this class might receive visions and dreams from his blade guide throughout his career. The guide might shepherd the character along the eternal blade path, leading him where he is needed most, giving clues that lead to lost treasure, ancient enemies, and so forth. For a higher-level character, the blade guide might simply manifest at a later age. Not every blade guide appears to an elf in childhood, and such a manifestation might herald an epic destiny for the character so chosen.

### ORGANIZATION

The good-aligned eternal blades gather in small groups called cadres. Each cadre is centered on a grove deep within the elven forests. These locations have names such as Blade Deep Grove, Ten Trees Stand, and the Eternal Redoubt. Many of these places were once majestic castles that housed hundreds of elite warriors. Today, they are mostly empty, dusty reminders of past glory. A number of them are located far from elf territories. In the long centuries since the groves were built, the forests around them might have been burned, a diverted river might have flooded them, and so forth. Orcs, goblins, or even a human king might occupy what was once an elf fortress. In other areas, the blades' redoubts have become monster-infested dungeons.

The eternal blades dwindle in numbers each year, and as their number grows smaller, they become increasingly unable to offer protection to their people. Many elf towns and cities haven't seen a visiting eternal blade in centuries. In some lands, these warriors are regarded as no more than myths from a bygone, better time.

A council of nine officers leads each grove, though in recent times many can't muster such numbers. Typically, as few as three or four senior elves coordinate the eternal blades of each grove. These warriors are usually too old to continue questing across the land. Instead, they seek to recruit new eternal blades and provide what training they can offer. Although a council might work hard, a deep sense of doom, misery, and pessimism rests over most groves. The elders can remember when hundreds of eternal blades would gather to defeat a dragon or throw back an invasion. Today, the elders watch in sorrow as fewer and fewer blades return from the quests they embark upon.

In some cases, a grove and the castle associated with it have fallen to invasion or been abandoned to the elements. The eternal blades have lost the location of many of these fortresses, and they are keen to reclaim them. Legend holds that a mighty artifact, the *Blade of Endil*, lies hidden in one such grove. Only when it is recovered can the eternal blades once again return to power.

### NPC REACTIONS

Most folk know little of the eternal blades. Even deep within ancient elf forests, the blades are known only as a small band of once-renowned knights. Many elves see them as well-meaning but misguided. These elves wonder why the blades must cling to the shadows of a once-great past. As befits their chaotic nature, most elves see life and history as a series of changes. What worked in ages past might not be a good fit for today. In a typical elf community, an eternal blade is seen as an anachronism—a figure who has stepped out of history, yet refused to adapt to the modern world.

Elves who enjoy the protection and aid of the eternal blades have a much different view. These elves see the blades as helpful guardians. In the regions around their fortresses, the eternal blades can expect at least a friendly welcome, food, and lodging from any elves. Unfortunately for the blades, a dark chapter in their history prevents them from becoming truly welcomed into the community. In ages past, a faction of eternal blades attempted to seize control of the elf realms. Elves who fall under the blades' protection today appreciate and welcome their assistance, but they take care to maintain their independence from these warriors.

Few nonelves have any knowledge of the eternal blades. The few who remember regard the blades as stalwart defenders of the realm. Dwarves and gnomes in particular treat them with respect, because on several occasions the eternal blades have worked to form alliances between the elves and other folk.

## ETERNAL BLADE LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (history) can research eternal blades to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** The eternal blades are an order of elf knights who fell into disfavor long ago for attempting to seize political control of several elf lands.

**DC 15:** The eternal blades use a strange fighting style that is almost magical in nature.

**DC 20:** An eternal blade communes with the spirit of an ancient warrior. This spirit aids the warrior in battle by providing advice, menacing his enemies, and lending him strength and support.

Finding an eternal blade is no easy task, since the few remaining members of this order dwell far from the realms of humanity. The best way to find an eternal blade grove is to consult with elf sages or historians to find the supposed location of a grove, travel there, and hope that the place has not yet fallen into neglect and ruin.

## ETERNAL BLADES IN THE GAME

Eternal blades are relatively easy to add to your game, since they are few in number and hard to find. The characters might not encounter any blades until well into the campaign, when you have decided that it is dramatically appropriate for them to appear. They might be forgotten defenders of an ancient item that the party seeks, or an elf warblade in the party might be the one prophesied to lead the eternal blades back to glory. This latter plot idea can be even more interesting if the elf PC is a reluctant hero, one who would rather seek glory on his own than deal with leading an entire order of warriors into battle.

Players with an interest in weaving epic plots and detailed backgrounds around their characters might find the eternal blade an interesting class. As written, the class cries out for a PC to take the role of the chosen warrior who leads the blades back to glory. Perhaps a great threat grows across the land, and only the eternal blades have the martial power needed to battle it. Until a skilled leader, such as a PC, emerges, the blades are too scattered and few in number to battle the threat.

### ADAPTATION

The eternal blades' background casts them as rare, isolated, and mostly forgotten to make them easy to integrate into a campaign. Almost any setting with elf kingdoms of any sort can play host to these talented warriors.

If you need a villain, or wish to add a sinister layer to the blades, perhaps the schism within the blades' ranks persists to this day. The original elves who led the attempt to seize control of the forests are now blade guides who corrupt the order. Some of them have the ears of the blades' leaders, and they use this access to render the blades ineffectual or self-destructive. A young warrior who teeters between good and evil might have an evil blade guide, or even a pair of opposed guides, fighting for his soul.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Aedar Windblade is an eternal blade who has taken it upon himself to seek out and shepherd young blades. He hopes that, by offering advice and help, he can guide young elf warriors to the order and help it regain its former glory. In particular, he is convinced that a messianic figure is destined to restore the blades and lead them to a glorious victory. Perhaps the prophecies and signs he has heard point to a PC elf as the most likely candidate for this honor.

**EL 13:** Aedar can be found wandering the land with his warhorse, Skychaser. He is a gregarious, friendly person with a natural tendency to help others. He might come across the PCs as they fight a monster in the wilds, or the PCs might find him attempting to defend a helpless family against a gang of monsters. If the PCs show their mettle, and if an elf warrior is in the group, Aedar strikes up a friendship and tries to determine if the elf PC is a good candidate for his order. Even if the group lacks an elf, he might attempt to convince the PCs to help the blades complete an important quest or drive off a humanoid invasion.

### AEDAR WINDBLADE CR 13

Male elf fighter 10/eternal blade 3
AL LG Medium humanoid
**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1
**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven

**AC** 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24; uncanny dodge (+11 armor, +3 shield)
**hp** 102 (13 HD)
**Immune** sleep
**Fort** +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7 (+9 against enchantments)

**Speed** 20 ft. in full plate; base speed 30 ft.
**Melee** *+3 longsword* +22/+17/+12 (1d8+9/19–20)
**Ranged** longbow +13 (1d8/×3)
**Base Atk** +13; **Grp** +17
**Atk Options** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, eternal training 2/day, guided strike
**Combat Gear** *potion of shield of faith +4, potion of cure moderate wounds*

**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 8th):
*Stances*—pearl of black doubt (3rd)
*Strikes*—emerald razor (2nd), insightful strike (3rd), ruby nightmare blade (4th)
*Counters*—action before thought (2nd), moment of perfect mind (1st)
*Disciplines:* Desert Wind, Diamond Mind, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw

Each of Aedar's maneuvers can be initiated once per encounter, with no recovery possible.

**Abilities** Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10
**SQ** able to notice secret or concealed doors, blade guide
**Feats** Combat Expertise$^{B}$, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword)$^{B}$, Improved Disarm$^{B}$, Improved Initiative$^{B}$, Iron Will, Martial Stance (pearl of black doubt), Martial Study (action before thought), Martial Study (emerald razor), Martial Study (moment of perfect mind), Weapon Focus (longsword)$^{B}$, Weapon Specialization (longsword)$^{B}$
**Skills** Concentration +18, Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +16
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+3 full plate armor, +1 heavy steel shield, +3 longsword,* longbow with 20 arrows, *gauntlets of ogre power*

# JADE PHOENIX MAGE

*"If I should fall, I will only arise again in a new body. The flame that is my soul cannot be quenched."*

—Kuthar of Ironhame, Mage of the Jade Phoenix

Long ago, a fellowship of swordsages known as the Masters of the Jade Phoenix took up the study of arcane magic in search of a new martial discipline. They discovered that the mental austerity and economy of action each swordsage had cultivated in his martial studies opened the door to a powerful and unique form of arcane mastery. Properly applied, the stances and maneuvers of a martial discipline provided the mage with exceptional power and control in his arcane spellcasting—and by channeling the arcane energy of his spells into his martial maneuvers, he achieved supernatural perfection in his chosen disciplines.

For years, this secret society defended the land against evil, perfecting this new path that wove together martial disciplines and arcane power. Then a terrible abomination, known only as the Souldrake, descended on the world, wreaking unthinkable destruction across the land. The realm defended by the masters of the Jade Phoenix was swept into ruin, but the arcane swordsages gathered together and confronted this fearsome enemy. Many masters died, but at the end of the struggle, the awful Souldrake was bound and imprisoned in a hidden vault. To ensure that their foe would never break free, the thirteen surviving members of the Jade Phoenix fellowship swore a mighty oath to walk the world for all eternity, maintaining the Souldrake's prison with their own unceasing vigilance. Such was the power of their oath that these spirits have been reborn again and again in the world, keeping the Souldrake immured in its secret prison.

Today, thirteen Jade Phoenix mages walk the earth—no more, no less. The instant one dies, a new one is born somewhere in the world. As he grows and learns, he is inevitably drawn to both the Sublime Way and the magical arts—for he was a master swordsage and a mighty wizard in previous lives he has now forgotten. In time, another Jade Phoenix master discovers the new incarnation of his old companion. In an age-old rite, the existing master awakens his newfound comrade to awareness of his past lives, renews the oaths of vigilance that bind the Souldrake in its prison, and reveals

Illus. by B. Tratt

to him the ancient secrets of the order. Both Jade Phoenix brothers then go their own way, their ancient duty discharged until once again a Jade Phoenix mage dies and is reborn.

## BECOMING A JADE PHOENIX MAGE

Most Jade Phoenix mages begin their careers as sorcerers, warmages, or wizards. From this beginning, two paths lead to membership in the fellowship of the Jade Phoenix—multiclassing in a martial adept class (crusader, swordsage, or warblade), or choosing Martial Study and Martial Stance feats to master the required number of martial maneuvers. The latter path is costly, since the number of feats you must spend to pursue this path is high, but that option is advantageous in that you do not need to take a level in a class that will not improve your arcane spellcasting ability.

As with any spellcaster, your primary spellcasting ability remains your most important ability score. After that, you will find good Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores highly useful, since you will risk melee combat much more frequently than most arcane spellcasters. Of these, Dexterity and Constitution are most important—your class abilities and martial maneuvers provide you with ways to compensate for a mediocre Strength score.

If you choose to take a level in this prestige class, you can safely assume that you are the reincarnation of one of the thirteen ancient guardians whose lives keep the Souldrake bound in its prison. Your Dungeon Master might require you to seek out an existing member of the order to determine if this is true. Alternatively, if you have earned fame and renown for your deeds, the Jade Phoenix masters might come looking for you.

*Kuthar the Jade Phoenix mage*

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Alignment:** Any nonevil.

**Skills:** Concentration 9 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 2 ranks, Knowledge (history) 2 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks.

**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know at least two martial maneuvers, including one strike.

**Martial Stances:** Must know at least one martial stance.

**Spells:** Ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

## CLASS FEATURES

The Jade Phoenix class features focus on improving your arcane spellcasting ability, but they also vastly improve your capabilities in melee combat by focusing your arcane energies into increased melee damage and through the acquisition of new maneuvers.

**Spellcasting:** At each level except 1st and 6th, you gain new spells per day and an increase in caster level (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a Jade Phoenix mage, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

**Maneuvers:** At each odd-numbered level, you gain a new maneuver known from the Desert Wind or Devoted Spirit disciplines. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full Jade Phoenix mage levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 3rd level, 6th level, and 9th level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Stances Known:** At 5th level, you learn a new martial stance from the Desert Wind or Devoted Spirit disciplines. You must meet a stance's prerequisite to learn it.

**Arcane Wrath (Su):** You can spontaneously channel stored spell energy (prepared spells or spell slots) into your melee attacks. As a swift action, you can lose any prepared arcane spell or spell slot to gain a +4 bonus on a single attack or martial strike, as well as an extra 1d10 points of damage per spell level expended. Both bonuses can be applied only on an attack made before the beginning of your next turn. For example, if you lose a 3rd-level spell slot or prepared spell, you gain a +4 bonus on an attack roll you make before your next turn, and you deal an extra 3d10 points of damage if your attack is successful.

**Rite of Waking (Ex):** When you become a Jade Phoenix mage, you participate in the Rite of Waking with the master who accepted you into the society. This rite takes 10 minutes, but requires nothing other than the presence of a Jade Phoenix master and a suitable candidate. On completion of the rite, you gain awareness of your previous lives. You now

**TABLE 5–5: THE JADE PHOENIX MAGE HIT DIE: D6**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Man. Known | Man. Readied | Stances Known | Special | Spellcasting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Arcane wrath, rite of waking | — |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Mystic phoenix stance | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | — | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Empowering strike | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | — | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Firebird stance, Jade Phoenix master | — |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Quickening strike | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | — | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +3 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | *Emerald immolation* | +1 level arcane spellcasting class |

**Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level):** Climb, Concentration, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Jump, Martial Lore*, Ride, Sense Motive, Tumble.

*New skill described on page 28.

remember places you visited, people you knew, and things you did in lifetimes long past. You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge checks, and you can attempt a Knowledge check even if you are untrained in the appropriate Knowledge skill. You also gain a +2 bonus on saving throws against death effects and fear effects.

**Mystic Phoenix Stance (Su):** At 2nd level, you learn how to channel the energy from one of your stances in a new way. While you are in a stance from any discipline you know, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of mystic phoenix stance. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the stance, or as described below. You can also stop using mystic phoenix stance and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

While you use this ability, your caster level when you cast arcane spells increases by 1, and you gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC. In addition, when you first activate this ability, you can choose to expend an arcane spell slot. If you do, you also gain damage reduction against all but evil-aligned attacks as long as you maintain the stance. The value of your damage reduction is equal to 2 × the level of the spell you expend (maximum damage reduction 10/evil for expending a 5th-level spell).

**Empowering Strike (Su):** Beginning at 4th level, when you successfully attack an enemy with a martial strike, an arcane spell that you cast before the end of your next turn is empowered (as by the Empower Spell metamagic feat). Casting a spell that has been empowered through this ability does not increase the effective level of a spell you cast. You do not need to know the Empower Spell feat to use this ability. You can use this ability once per encounter.

**Firebird Stance (Su):** At 6th level, you learn another application for a stance you know. While you are in a stance from any discipline you know, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of firebird stance. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the stance, or as described below. You can also stop using firebird stance and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

While this ability is active, you gain resistance to fire 10, and your caster level when you cast any fire spell increases by 3. In addition, you can choose to expend an arcane spell slot when you activate the ability. If you do, you gain an aura that deals 1d6 points of damage per spell level to any creature within 10 feet (Reflex half, DC 14 + key spellcasting ability modifier). Half the damage dealt by the aura is fire, and the other half is raw arcane energy (untyped damage). The aura deals damage each round at the beginning of your turn. Once you activate this ability, the fiery aura lasts for 1 minute, after which time the effect ends and the normal effect of your stance resumes.

**Jade Phoenix Master (Su):** When you attain 6th level, you earn the right to call yourself a Jade Phoenix master. You can now perform the Rite of Waking for someone else, provided he or she is a suitable candidate and embodies the reincarnated spirit of one of the ancient masters. (The DM decides if this is true for any given NPC.) You gain the ability to sense the direction and distance to the nearest Jade Phoenix mage, master, or candidate simply by meditating for 1 minute without interruption.

**Quickening Strike (Su):** Starting at 8th level, when you successfully attack an enemy with a martial strike, an arcane spell of 5th level or lower that you cast before the end of your next turn is quickened (as by the Quicken Spell metamagic feat). Casting a spell that has been quickened by this ability does not increase the effective level of the spell you cast. You do not need to know the Quicken Spell feat to use this ability. You can use this ability once per encounter.

**Emerald Immolation (Sp):** At 10th level, once per week you can perform the awesome *emerald immolation*. You explode in a searing blast of green fire that deals 20d6 points of damage in a 20-foot radius (Reflex half, DC 19 + key spellcasting ability modifier). Half the damage the blast deals is fire, and the other half is raw arcane energy (untyped damage). Extraplanar creatures that fail their saves must immediately succeed on a Will save (DC 19 + key spellcasting ability modifier) or be dismissed to their native planes. This blast utterly destroys you, but 1d6 rounds later, you re-form in the exact spot where you were when you employed this ability. You are dazed for 1 round after you reappear, but you are healed of all damage (including ability drain or damage), blindness, deafness, disease, paralysis, or poison. Any equipment you were wearing or objects you were holding or carrying when you used this ability re-form with you, exactly as they were. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

## PLAYING A JADE PHOENIX MAGE

You have lived through a dozen lifetimes. You have roamed the world from one end to the other, you have learned and forgotten countless pieces of information and names, you have built empires, and you have fallen in abject, ignominious defeat. While other heroes struggle to find their place in the world or wrestle with the consequences of their actions, you view all things with equanimity. Whatever the danger, whatever the injustice, whatever the evil that rises up to threaten the world—it too shall pass.

Given the long, wearying journey passing through lifetime after lifetime, some Jade Phoenix mages become dispassionate and distant. Why form attachments to people, places, or causes, when sooner or later all will be lost again and a new life begun somewhere else? Other members of the fellowship grow arrogant and insufferable, coming to think of other mortals as lesser beings because they are limited to the experience and wisdom of a single lifetime. But most Jade Phoenix mages learn compassion, humility, and a wry sense of humor over their long journeys. Who else can better understand the magnificent jest of existence than someone who has lived and died dozens of times?

Regardless of whether your long existence has left you wise or weary, you are a clever and patient enemy of evil. You despise tyranny and cruelty in any form, for these things blight the world—and you fear that a world whose spirit is poisoned by too much wrong will be defenseless against the Souldrake. In her dark, dreaming prison she grows strong on the terror and misery of the innocent, and the day might come when she awakens and breaks free. To prevent her return, you fight oppression, injustice, and savagery wherever you find them.

### COMBAT

Your combination of martial maneuvers and spellcasting gives you the ability to fight well in melee as well as at range. In fact, many of your defining abilities require you to prepare an arcane attack by executing martial maneuvers or use your untapped spell energy to add power to your martial strikes. A battle in which you mix your martial strikes with your arcane spells allows you to get the most out of your suite of abilities. Remember, you are not a front-line fighter; you must rely on magic and guile to avoid your enemies' attacks when you close to melee to use your martial maneuvers.

You can easily adapt your tactics to the foes you face. If you find yourself confronting enemies who are highly resistant to magic, use your arcane spell energy to add power to your martial strikes and defeat them with the Sublime Way. If you face enemies who are formidable in close combat, use your martial strikes to set up devastating magical attacks.

Although most of your combat prowess resides in your martial maneuvers and spellcasting ability, don't overlook your highly useful stance-related abilities. The mystic phoenix stance helps you survive close battles, and the firebird stance can make you a dangerous target for enemies who rely on melee attacks. However, be careful with your arcane spell slots. If you expend slots routinely on arcane wrath or to add power to your stance abilities while slinging spells every round, you will find that you burn through your spell slots faster than you might like.

### ADVANCEMENT

You already possessed some skill with magic and some mastery of the Sublime Way before you came to the attention of the other Jade Phoenix mages. When you are ready to accept the truth of who and what you really are, a Jade Phoenix master seeks you out, even if doing so takes years. Once you are found, the master typically observes you for a time to determine if you are in fact one of his ancient comrades. Many masters feel that the best way to be sure of your readiness is to challenge you to a contest of martial and magical skill, but not all masters hold to this view. As long as you acquit yourself reasonably well in such a duel, you will be told the truth about who you are; you do not need to win. If you fight with courage but little skill, you will be left to go your own way for a time in the hope that in a year or two you might prove more ready. If you demonstrate cowardice or treachery, the testing master might elect to kill you—a stain of evil would weaken the Souldrake's prison, and after all, your spirit will be reborn. You might be a better person in your next incarnation.

Once you are awakened to your previous lives and your sacred trust, you are left to resume your own affairs. You are expected to aid another Jade Phoenix mage on the rare occasions you meet with one, and should you discover that one of your old comrades has been reborn and awaits the Rite of Waking, you are expected to bring him to a master or bring a master to him. When you reach the title of master, you normally address the matter yourself without seeking the advice or consent of your peers—you know the fellowship's responsibilities because you have discharged them for a dozen lifetimes.

As you continue to gain levels, you might alternate between your arcane spellcasting class, your martial adept class (if any), and your Jade Phoenix levels. Most practitioners of this tradition follow the Jade Phoenix path exclusively for time—at least until they attain the level of mastery they had in their previous life. Feats, spells, and maneuvers that make it easy for you to switch between melee attacks and arcane spellcasting are extremely useful. Consider learning feats such as Combat Casting or Spring Attack; spells such as *fly*; or martial maneuvers such as salamander charge or wind stride. Ranks in Concentration or Tumble might also prove helpful.

### RESOURCES

Jade Phoenix mages are few and far between. Most wander the world engaged in their own personal quests and struggles, interacting with their peers only through chance and happenstance. Even mortal peril is not always sufficient to gain the aid or sympathy of a fellow Jade Phoenix mage, since your death is, after all, nothing more than a momentary inconvenience in the eyes of the other masters. Sooner or later, you will meet again.

Ironically, one of your more interesting and useful resources is yourself—specifically, yourself in a past life. Some Jade Phoenix mages make a point of secreting useful things such as treasure, magic items, or simple information in hidden caches all over the world, not knowing when or if they might ever need them again. The location and value of these old caches are up to your DM, but magic items totaling 1,000 gp or less in value that you "remember" no more than once per Jade Phoenix mage level would be reasonable. Of course, your caches might not be located anywhere nearby when you decide you need one, and you might have left traps or guardians to protect them.

## JADE PHOENIX MAGES IN THE WORLD

*"You seem to have me at a disadvantage, human. You say that we have met, but I am certain that I have never laid eyes on you before today."*

—Arexakarius, red dragon

The Jade Phoenix mage serves as a mystic wanderer, free-roaming troubleshooter, champion, and teacher who travels the world with few ties to any place, person, or cause. Most are willing to share their arcane knowledge or martial enlightenment with any apt student they encounter, whether or not that person harbors the spirit of an ancient comrade. A Jade Phoenix mage might therefore appear as an ally or mentor to player characters who study magic or follow the Sublime Way.

Since a Jade Phoenix mage is exceptionally well traveled and familiar with the people and events of times long gone by, he can also serve as a living witness to historic events. Adventurers in search of hard-to-find information about events that happened long ago might find that a Jade Phoenix mage recalls the events in question much more accurately than any scribe has ever set them down. A Jade Phoenix mage can therefore serve as a sage of sorts, aiding the player characters by passing along information they might otherwise have no way to discover.

### DAILY LIFE (AND DEATH)

A Jade Phoenix mage is free to pursue his own interests and do whatever he wishes with his life, so long as he honors the basic tenets of the fellowship: Aid his fellows when asked, stand against corruption and tyranny, and keep the sacred watch alive by waking newly reincarnated fellows to their ancient oaths and true identities when necessary. In practice, most Jade Phoenix mages become wanderers. Some choose to live and teach for a time at a monastery or temple of like-minded students of the Sublime Way, becoming renowned masters in the process.

Because the spirit of a Jade Phoenix mage is bound to the world and fated to be reborn, death is a different sort of experience for him. The spirit of a Jade Phoenix mage does not voyage on to the afterlife in the planes, nor does it instantly reincarnate at the moment of death. The spirit simply slumbers for a time, remaining discorporate for a few hours or days before it is drawn back to the world and reborn. During this time, *raise dead* and *resurrection* spells cast on the deceased character function normally. If a dead Jade Phoenix mage is not brought back to life within this period of slumber, the spirit reincarnates and is born again as a new person somewhere else. After this time, no resurrection magic can bring him back to his previous existence. In other words, if a player intends for his character to be raised, he has time to be brought back; if a player chooses for his character to remain dead, his spirit quickly reincarnates and begins life again elsewhere.

### ORGANIZATION

All Jade Phoenix mages fall into one of three categories: candidates, initiates, and masters. Candidates are those individuals who harbor one of the thirteen ancient spirits, but simply don't know it yet. While they grow to adulthood and take up the study of magic and martial prowess, other members of the group might keep an eye on their progress, but the candidates are not told of their true calling or ancient duty until such a time as they are ready to accept these truths. Most candidates might come to realize that a mysterious sorcerer or wizard is interested in their progress, and a few might even be tutored directly by a Jade Phoenix mage who deems it necessary to return his old comrade to full wakefulness in a hurry.

Initiates are fully awakened Jade Phoenix mages—characters who have taken at least one level in this prestige class and undergone the Rite of Waking. All initiates signify their allegiance to their ancient order by tattooing the emblem of a green phoenix prominently on their bodies—usually the chest or the back of the hand, but sometimes the face or head.

Masters are Jade Phoenix mages who have reached a level of significant magical and martial power in their current incarnation. The title is one that has little weight. The group does not recognize any lasting precedence of rank or position, since each spirit must begin anew with each rebirth. At any given time, one Jade Phoenix mage might be a 15-year-old candidate struggling to master her first spells while another is a 60-year-old archmage with command of epic spellcasting, but both spirits are the same age and share the same ancient duty. For a short time, the spirit in the younger body owes some deference to the spirit who has experienced more and accomplished greater things in its current incarnation, but in a few short years the candidate will be the archmage, and the archmage will struggle to recall his old skill at magic.

### NPC REACTIONS

Jade Phoenix mages are so rare that very few NPCs have any preconceived notions about the fellowship. Most of the time, they are treated as any skilled warrior-mage might expect to be treated. However, itinerant Jade Phoenix masters have opposed tyrants, monsters, and villains all over the world, so any particular master contends with the possibility that one or another of his twelve fellow mages might have made a name for the society in some land or another. More than one Jade Phoenix mage has wandered into a new land only to discover that generations ago one of his old companions battled some mighty evil there, and is remembered by the people he fought for—or against.

## JADE PHOENIX MAGE LORE

Characters with the Knowledge (history) skill can research the fellowship of the Jade Phoenix to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** I've heard old tales of strange sorcerers who mark themselves with the image of an emerald phoenix. No one knows who they are, where they come from, or where they go when they leave.

**DC 15:** These individuals are known as the order of the Jade Phoenix. They're an elite society of warrior-mages who know powerful secrets of both martial and arcane lore.

**DC 20:** The group has only thirteen members at any one time. When one dies, they find another mage to join their order. They oppose the workings of evil wherever they find it.

**DC 25:** The reason the group has only thirteen members is because each Jade Phoenix mage is reborn when he dies. These are the same thirteen masters who have made up the society for hundreds of years. Long ago they swore an oath to protect the world against some terrible demiurge known as the Souldrake, who is imprisoned in a hidden magical vault. As long as they are faithful to their oaths, the Souldrake cannot escape.

**DC 30:** Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about a specific Jade Phoenix mage in your campaign, including the areas where he operates, the kinds of activities he undertakes, and at least one identity of his previous incarnation, as well as some of his greater accomplishments in that life.

The fellowship of the Jade Phoenix does not maintain any sort of temple, sanctuary, or stronghold. However, at any given time it's not unusual for one or two masters to settle down in a monastery or arcane guildhouse, and teach students who seek to learn both the Sublime Way and the arcane arts. A character must succeed on a DC 25 Gather Information check to locate a Jade Phoenix master who has chosen to settle down for a time.

## JADE PHOENIX MAGES IN THE GAME

Jade Phoenix mages are more often allies than enemies. Even if no character in the party is particularly likely to join the prestige class, a Jade Phoenix mage can serve as an interesting mentor who appears from time to time, offering cryptic advice and guidance to heroes in need.

As a player character, a Jade Phoenix mage appeals to players who like the challenge of creating innovative tactics combining spells and melee attacks. Other players might be attracted to the possibilities of describing the adventures, friends, and enemies of lifetimes now long past; if any character can say, "I've seen something like that before" in almost any situation, it's the Jade Phoenix mage.

### ADAPTATION

The most interesting way to adapt the Jade Phoenix mages to your own campaign is to define a specific evil power they keep imprisoned. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, the Jade Phoenix mages might play a role in keeping Dendar, the Night Serpent, asleep in her vast prison beneath the Peaks of Flame. In the world of the EBERRON campaign, the Jade Phoenix fellowship might keep some monstrous offspring of Khyber immobile and insensate. As long as they still live, the demonspawn remains trapped in the underworld.

For a real twist, consider making the Jade Phoenix fellowship into the Ebon Phoenix. The thirteen ancient swordsage-wizards were not servants of good, but instead the chosen champions of some evil god-king. As long as they still survive, the evil overlord cannot be wholly expunged from the world, and so these terrible ancient spirits keep alive the hope of returning their dark master to power someday. Destroying all thirteen Ebon Phoenix mages would require an epic quest to find and ultimately imprison or destroy each spirit before it can reincarnate.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

A Jade Phoenix mage is appropriate in any encounter where you might want to introduce a nonevil sorcerer or wizard as an advisor, rival, or foil to the heroes.

**EL 10:** When the PCs decide to explore an ancient tomb, Kuthar of Ironhame intervenes, telling the heroes that they must not open the crypt. He knows that a powerful demon is trapped within the tomb, because long ago Kuthar trapped him there. He dares not take any chance of allowing the demon to escape. This encounter works best if the PCs intend to explore the tomb no matter what Kuthar says—for example, if the characters need to retrieve an ancient book or key from within the tomb to solve another pressing challenge, their mission will put them squarely at odds with the Jade Phoenix mage.

Rather than fight to the death against the whole party, Kuthar offers to duel the party's best to resolve the question of whether or not the tomb will be opened. It might also be possible for the PCs to persuade Kuthar to allow the tomb to be opened if they offer to help him destroy the demon should they encounter the creature.

**KUTHAR OF IRONHAME** **CR 10**
Male human warblade 1/wizard 5/Jade Phoenix mage 4
NG Medium humanoid
**Init** +2; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elf, Giant

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**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Dodge, Mobility
(+2 Dex, +3 armor)
**hp** 58 (10 HD)
**Fort** +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *greatsword* +11/+6 (2d6+4), or
**Ranged** shortbow +9/+4 (1d6)
**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +9
**Atk Options** Spring Attack, arcane wrath, empowering strike
**Special Actions** mystic phoenix stance
**Combat Gear** 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

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**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 8th):
*Stances*—stance of clarity (1st)
*Strikes*—burning charge† (4th), charging minotaur (1st), fan the flames† (3rd), stone bones† (1st)
*Boosts*—sudden leap† (1st)
*Disciplines:* Desert Wind, Diamond Mind, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw
† Readied maneuver
**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 8th):
4th—*Evard's black tentacles* (grapple +16), *greater invisibility*
3rd—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 16), *haste, protection from energy*
2nd—*blur, false life, mirror image, scorching ray* (ranged touch +9)
1st—*enlarge person, magic missile* (3), *shield*
0—*acid splash* (ranged touch +9), *ghost sound, ray of frost* (ranged touch +9), *touch of fatigue* (touch +9)

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**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8
**SQ** Rite of Waking, weapon aptitude
**Feats** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Vital Recovery, Weapon Focus (greatsword)
**Skills** Balance +13, Concentration +15, Decipher Script +7, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +2, Martial Lore +11, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +11, Spot +2, Swim +4, Tumble +8.
**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 *greatsword*, shortbow with 20 arrows, *gauntlets of ogre power, bracers of armor +3*
**Spellbook** spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*color spray;* 4th—*dimension door, ice storm*

# MASTER OF NINE

*"Tiger Claw. Shadow Hand. White Raven. All of these are not paths in and of themselves. They are simply steps along the True Path, the Path of which I am master."*

—Ninefold Sage of Crimson

Some savants of the Nine Disciplines believe that none of the paths are complete, true disciplines in and of themselves. They believe that the nine disciplines are perhaps more appropriately termed the Nine Steps, each a single portion of a true, whole Way. These few masters strive to learn the secrets of each path, and in so doing become the masters of nine, using a martial style that combines all of the techniques of the Temple of Nine Swords. Such martial sages are fluid and unpredictable martial artists, capable of switching between styles and techniques to suit each situation.

## BECOMING A MASTER OF NINE

A master of nine typically begins his career as a warblade or swordsage, as those paths provide the broadest access to martial disciplines. Occasionally, a crusader might become a master of nine after selecting the Martial Study feat multiple times.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Skills:** 10 ranks in four key discipline skills.
**Feats:** Adaptive Style*, Dodge, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike.
**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know at least one maneuver from six different disciplines.
*New feat described on page 28.

## CLASS FEATURES

The master of nine expands his knowledge of martial maneuvers to include all nine martial disciplines. As he advances, he learns ways of combining maneuvers from different disciplines to great effect. Finally, his mastery of all nine disciplines grants him a greater understanding of the path of the martial adept.

**Maneuvers:** At each odd-numbered level, you gain two new maneuvers known from any of the nine disciplines. At each even-numbered level, you gain one new maneuver known from any of the nine disciplines. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full master of nine levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At each level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Stances Known:** At 2nd level and again at 4th level, you learn a new martial stance from any discipline. You must meet a stance's prerequisite to learn it.

**Dual Stance (Ex):** Starting at 2nd level, you can choose to not lose your current stance when you enter a different stance from another discipline. The amount of time you can spend in two stances is limited. You can use this ability to gain the benefits of two stances for a maximum of 2 rounds per class level each day, split up as you desire among multiple uses and multiple stance pairs.

**Perfect Form (Ex):** Beginning at 3rd level, you initiate your maneuvers with greater fluidity and grace. The save DC (if any) of any maneuver you initiate increases by 1.

**Counter Stance (Ex):** From 4th level on, whenever you initiate a counter maneuver, you can change your stance as part of the counter's action, even if it is not your turn.

**Mastery of Nine (Ex):** At 5th level, you have attained mastery of all nine disciplines. You gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls made when initiating any strike maneuver, and your strikes deal extra damage equal to the number of disciplines you readied maneuvers from at the beginning of the day. For example, if you ready maneuvers from six different disciplines, you gain a +6 bonus on damage rolls when you initiate your strikes.

## PLAYING A MASTER OF NINE

To you, each of the individual styles is incomplete. Each discipline is like a single petal of a flower—beautiful, elegant and finely formed, perhaps, but each grants only a partial understanding of the whole. Masters of nine often speak of the Nine-Petal Blossom, the symbolic representation of this concept. You are driven, intent on learning the secrets of the

**TABLE 5–6: THE MASTER OF NINE** **HIT DIE: D8**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | — |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +0 | +3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Dual stance |
| 3rd | +2 | +1 | +1 | +3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | Perfect form |
| 4th | +3 | +1 | +1 | +4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Counter stance |
| 5th | +3 | +1 | +1 | +4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | Mastery of nine |

**Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Martial Lore*, Sense Motive, Swim, Tumble.
*New skill described on page 28.

Ninefold Way. You tend to show some small amount of pity for those who don't see the whole picture and focus only on their one style, but you aren't arrogant; you once stood in their place. You simply can't wait for their vision to broaden. Perhaps you can help them.

As a group, masters of nine have no overarching objectives or plans. They are simply a group of martial adepts who have come to understand that as powerful as a single discipline is, when unified, they become something full of power, grace, and beauty. Your standing among other masters is determined by two things: your own progress in mastering the Ninefold Way, and how many others you have instructed in the ways of the Nine-Petal Blossom, teaching them its secrets and setting them on the path. Those who not only have the wisdom to see the Blossom but also to show it to others are well regarded among the masters.

## COMBAT

In battle, you are unpredictable and graceful. You prefer to single out those among your foes who obviously have some knowledge of the techniques of the Sublime Way, so that you can best them. You want to dazzle your foe with a display of martial mastery, for who knows? Perhaps the enemy you battle today shall come to you for the wisdom of the Ninefold Way tomorrow. You also prefer the pure and personal nature of hand-to-hand combat.

## ADVANCEMENT

Your vision was always wide as a martial adept. Perhaps you saw connections between martial styles that seemed to share little in common with one another. You might have even had multiple masters, trying desperately to learn what each of them had to teach without neglecting your advancement with any one of them (you might have even succeeded, drawing the attention of a master of nine). Regardless of the precise details of the past, the masters saw you as someone with the potential to behold the Nine-Petal Blossom, and one of them took you under his wing.

Now, you are one of them. The insights that came with your training were unlike any you had experienced before, though you suspected all along that something like this path must exist somewhere in the world. Now, you are responsible for only two things: your own advancing mastery of the Ninefold Way, and helping to open the eyes of others to its potential.

From this point, you must maintain your edge. Keep advancing in the key skills of the nine disciplines as much as possible. Your feat choices should reflect your amazing mastery of the Nine Ways. Many of the feats in this book might help you, and feats such as Martial Study allow you to further expand your maneuver selection.

## RESOURCES

Though the masters of the nine sometimes gather to train together and share their insights, they value self-sufficiency. As such, it is rare that they help one another in anything but the most dire of circumstances. As puissant adepts of martial discipline beyond the skill of most folk, they are happy to aid those who don't share their level of enlightenment however they can, but masters of nine believe that their peers should be capable of handling most situations without aid. Only a threat to the masters as a whole, such as someone systematically hunting down or otherwise persecuting the masters of nine, is likely to cause them to band together.

# MASTERS OF NINE IN THE WORLD

*"The techniques of the masters of nine are elegant and powerful—and greatly to be feared. Beware their wrath, lest you find yourself battling your own strengths."*

—Master Kosukan, archivist-monk
of the Thousand-Petal Orchid Temple

Masters of nine are, in many ways, archetypal martial artists. They really seek only one goal: the perfection of their style. The best means of doing this is through adventuring. Masters of nine are fond of dueling other martial artists and demonstrating their superiority (or, in some cases, discovering where their own abilities are lacking).

## ORGANIZATION

The masters of nine, though a network made up of masters and former apprentices, are a loose society of peers. None of them maintain any kind of authority over the others, except the informal authority given to those who have walked the Ninefold Path for some time and discovered many of its secrets. Masters of nine do not train one another—once a master succeeds at setting the feet of a martial adept onto the path, the student must walk it for himself. Each master understands the Ninefold Path a little differently and practices it in his own way. Masters enjoy the opportunity to spar with one another. Such battles are quite a sight to behold, full of breathtaking feats of martial mastery and athleticism.

## NPC REACTIONS

Most people who encounter a master of nine don't really know enough about such folk to treat them any differently than they would any other dedicated martial adept. Other martial adepts, however, and those who are knowledgeable in the lore of their kind, believe that the masters of nine are simply dilettantes without the discipline to truly master a single style. Others feel that the masters are sages who have unlocked a mystery of the martial disciplines. All adepts understand that any master of nine they encounter is powerful and skilled, and certainly not to be trifled with. Generally speaking, martial adepts give masters a friendly reception, unless they are staunch single-style enthusiasts, in which case the reaction might be a bit more confrontational.

## MASTER OF NINE LORE

Characters with ranks in Martial Lore can research masters of nine to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

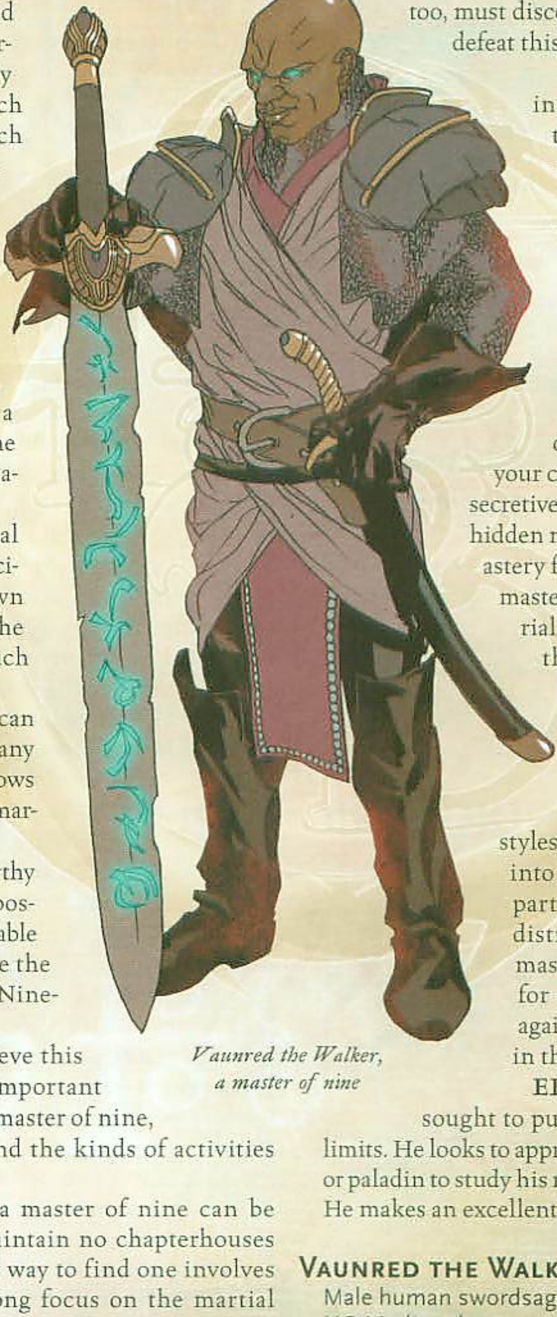
**DC 10:** Some powerful martial adepts study all nine known disciplines. They are sometimes known as masters of nine, masters of the Nine-Petal Blossom, or other such fanciful names.

**DC 15:** The master of nine can quickly adapt his style to exploit any weakness a foe possesses. He knows more maneuvers than any other martial adept.

**DC 20:** A master of nine is a worthy opponent, or a valued ally. Few possess the breadth of abilities available to a master of nine, and few have the patience or ability to walk the Ninefold Path.

**DC 30:** Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about a specific notable master of nine, the areas where he operates, and the kinds of activities he undertakes.

Setting up a meeting with a master of nine can be difficult, since the masters maintain no chapterhouses or colleges. Instead, the easiest way to find one involves going to any place with a strong focus on the martial disciplines, for the masters often seek out new pupils in such places. At the very least, an experienced martial adept is likely to have some idea where a master of nine can be found.



*Vaunred the Walker, a master of nine*

Illus. by K. Andrasofszky

## MASTERS OF NINE IN THE GAME

A master of nine is often the proverbial Old Man of the Mountain, an ascetic who seeks to test his body and technique to master both. If your setting includes martial adepts already, it is simple enough to extrapolate the existence of masters of nine. If your setting does not, however, a visiting master of nine is an excellent way of introducing the class into the campaign without dramatically altering the setting assumptions. Masters are not limited to kindly sages, however, and can easily fill the role of adversary, displaying such skill in defeating the party that the PCs realize that they, too, must discover and follow the Ninefold Path to defeat this new foe.

Players focused on and interested in the martial adept classes and abilities will find enjoyment in this class, which makes generalization a specialty. The master of nine is likely to have the greatest access to a variety of fighting styles, allowing a broad exploration of the various discipline techniques.

### ADAPTATION

A master of nine can fill the role of the ultimate weapon master in your campaign. An order of elite knights, a secretive cabal of mystic warriors, or a group of hidden masters sequestered in a distant monastery fit this class. You could also make the masters of nine into an elite group of imperial servants, tasked with hunting down the enemies of the realm—whether good or evil.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

A master of nine is likely to walk the world in search of new fighting styles, tactics, and methods to incorporate into his studies. If the PCs are famous, particularly if they are known for any distinctive tactics or fighting talents, a master is likely to seek them out simply for the purpose of trying his strength against the most skillful warrior or adept in the party.

**EL 10:** Vaunred the Walker has long sought to push his martial talents beyond their limits. He looks to apprentice himself to a barbarian, ranger, or paladin to study his new master's techniques and abilities. He makes an excellent cohort or ally.

**VAUNRED THE WALKER** **CR 10**

Male human swordsage 7/master of nine 3
NG Medium humanoid
**Init** +9; **Senses** Spot +3, Listen +3
**Languages** Common

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 19
(+3 Dex, +3 Wis, +5 armor, +1 deflection)

**hp** 58 (10 HD)
**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Melee** *+2 greatsword* +12/+7 melee (2d6+5/19–20) or
**Melee** improved unarmed strike +9/+4 melee (1d6+2)
**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +9
**Atk Options** insightful strike (+3 on damage rolls with Stone Dragon strikes)
**Special Actions** dual stance (6 rounds)
**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility, potion of haste*
**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 10th):
*Stances*—child of shadow (1st), giant killing style (3rd), stance of clarity (1st)
*Strikes*—bonecrusher† (DC 17) (3rd), charging minotaur (1st), dancing mongoose† (5th), death from above† (4th), fire snake† (DC 18) (4th), mountain hammer (2nd), sapphire nightmare blade (1st), stone bones (1st), strength draining strike† (DC 17) (3rd)
*Boosts*—burning blade (1st), sudden leap (1st), wind stride† (1st)
*Counters*—counter charge (1st), fire riposte† (2nd), leaping flame† (5th), wall of blades (2nd)
*Other*—shadow stride† (5th)
*Disciplines:* Desert Wind, Diamond Mind, Iron Heart, Setting Sun, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw
† Readied maneuver

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**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8
**SQ** sense magic
**Feats** Adaptive Style, Dodge, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (Stone Dragon weapons)$^{B}$
**Skills** Balance +14, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +1, Heal +8, Hide +15, Intimidate +12, Jump +15, Listen +8, Martial Lore +5, Sense Motive +16, Tumble +14
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+1 chain shirt, +2 greatsword, gloves of Dexterity +2, +1 ring of protection*

# RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATOR

*"You've threatened our people for the last time, cur."*
—Ereth Nazbek, a Ruby Knight of Wee Jas

The Ruby Knights are a crusader order in the service of Wee Jas, goddess of death and magic. Inscrutable and mysterious, these secretive warriors serve as the militant arm of the Jasite faith. They protect the temples of Wee Jas, guard important leaders of the church, aid powerful sorcerers and necromancers sworn to the Witch Goddess, and help to train novice clergy. When called upon, they also serve as spies and assassins. Within the Ruby Knight order, the knights-vindicator are responsible for undertaking duties of the last variety. Most of the time, a knight-vindicator is free to do as he pleases, but every so often leaders of the knightly order or high priests of the faith come to him with a special assignment that requires stealth, intimidation, or assassination. A Ruby Knight vindicator relies on his spiritual strength and skill in martial disciplines rarely mastered by crusaders to capture or dispatch marked enemies of the faith. He strikes with unflinching determination and righteous vengeance, and his benefactors within the church sleep comfortably knowing the Ruby Knights always stand ready to do the church's bidding.

## BECOMING A RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATOR

Due to the entry requirements, most Ruby Knight vindicators are multiclass crusader/clerics or paladins who have entered this class after learning a Devoted Spirit maneuver, either by selecting the appropriate feats or by taking a level in the crusader class.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Skills:** Hide 4 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks.
**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know at least one Devoted Spirit maneuver.
**Martial Stancess:** Must know at least one Devoted Spirit stance.
**Deity:** Wee Jas.
**Special:** Ability to turn or rebuke undead.

## CLASS FEATURES

A Ruby Knight vindicator learns new martial maneuvers, including maneuvers of the Shadow Hand discipline, while continuing to advance his divine spellcasting ability. Moreover, he gains class features specifically designed to channel his divine power into his martial maneuvers.

**Spellcasting:** At each level except 1st and 6th, you gain new spells per day and an increase in caster level (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one divine spellcasting class before becoming a devoted enforcer, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

**Maneuvers:** At each even-numbered level, you gain one new maneuver known from the Devoted Spirit, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon, or White Raven disciplines. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full Ruby Knight vindicator levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 5th level and 9th level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Stances Known:** At 1st level and again at 6th level, you learn a new martial stance from the Devoted Spirit, Shadow Hand, Stone Dragon, or White Raven discipline. You must meet a stance's prerequisite to learn it.

**Divine Recovery (Su):** Beginning at 2nd level, you can channel divine power to recharge your martial maneuvers. You can expend a turn or rebuke undead attempt as a swift action to recover one expended maneuver. If you are a crusader, the maneuver you recover is immediately available to you as a granted maneuver.

**Armored Stealth (Ex):** Knights-vindicator are taught unusual techniques for staying out of sight. Starting at 5th

**TABLE 5–7: THE RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATOR HIT DIE: D8**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Man. Known | Man. Readied | Stances Known | Special | Spellcasting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | — | — |
| 2nd | +2 | +0 | +0 | +3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Divine recovery | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 3rd | +3 | +1 | +1 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 4th | +4 | +1 | +1 | +4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 5th | +5 | +1 | +1 | +4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Armored stealth | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 6th | +6 | +2 | +2 | +5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | — | — |
| 7th | +7 | +2 | +2 | +5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Divine impetus | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 8th | +8 | +2 | +2 | +6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 9th | +9 | +3 | +3 | +6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Divine fury | +1 level divine spellcasting class |
| 10th | +10 | +3 | +3 | +7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | +1 level divine spellcasting class |

**Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Heal, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), Martial Lore*, Profession, Ride, Sense Motive, Spellcraft.

*New skill described on page 28.

level, you no longer take an armor check penalty on Hide checks. Your armor check penalty still applies to any other skills affected by armor check penalties.

**Divine Impetus (Su):** At 7th level, you learn how to use the divine power of the Stern Lady to quicken your reactions and act without hesitation. You can expend a turn or rebuke undead attempt to gain one additional swift action this round. For example, you could use this ability to both change your stance and initiate a boost maneuver in the same turn, or if you initiated a counter before your turn, you can activate this ability and then initiate a boost on your turn.

**Divine Fury (Su):** From 9th level on, you can directly channel Wee Jas's divine energy into your martial strikes. As a free action, you can spend a turn or rebuke undead attempt to add a +4 sacred (or profane, if you are evil) bonus on your attack roll with one martial strike this turn. In addition to its normal effects, the strike deals an extra 1d10 points of damage.

**Multiclass Note:** A paladin who becomes a Ruby Knight vindicator can continue advancing as a paladin.

## PLAYING A RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATOR

You are a dark knight who swoops in to help his church in its time of need. You have served within the hierarchy of Wee Jas's faith, and you have won the right and privilege of determining for yourself how best to advance the Ruby Sorceress's cause. You are, for the most part, an adventurer who is periodically asked to complete a specific mission that requires your brand of ruthlessness and stealth. You are the living symbol of the Ruby Sorceress's wrath, and this role within the church gives you a somewhat sinister mystique. You have enough clout and prestige to decline a mission for any reason, but your zealous devotion almost always compels you to complete a task in whatever manner you deem most effective. You are a weapon of the church, to be wielded only in dire circumstances. Your conviction enables you to do the terrible deeds that other members of the church abhor or lack the skills to accomplish.

Once the church determines that it needs your help, a high-ranking cleric uses a *sending* spell or similar device to secretly contact you and invite you to the temple or some secret location for a "situation briefing." The mission in question usually requires a combination of subterfuge and martial prowess—two areas in which you excel. Sample missions include capturing a thief who has stolen relics from the church, spying on the activities of a troublesome cult, or assassinating a hard-to-reach adversary who has persistently antagonized the church or its members. If you have friends or associates with skills that might help you complete your quest, you can use them as the situation warrants—leaders of the Jasite faith trust you to use your best discretion regarding methods and tactics. Once you complete your mission, you are free to return to your regular life until you're called upon again.

When you commit to a mission, nothing stands between you and its completion. You are highly focused and disciplined, and no distraction except an assault on your church will deter you.

Church officials sometimes disavow a knight-vindicator captured in the line of duty, since to admit complicity could cast a dim shadow over the church or attract undue attention to its activities. Death is another matter entirely. Unless you have proven yourself inept by failing mission after mission, church officials will strive to resurrect you, their sworn knight, in the belief that you will continue to serve them faithfully. More than a few Ruby Knights are brought back to continue their service in undeath as well.

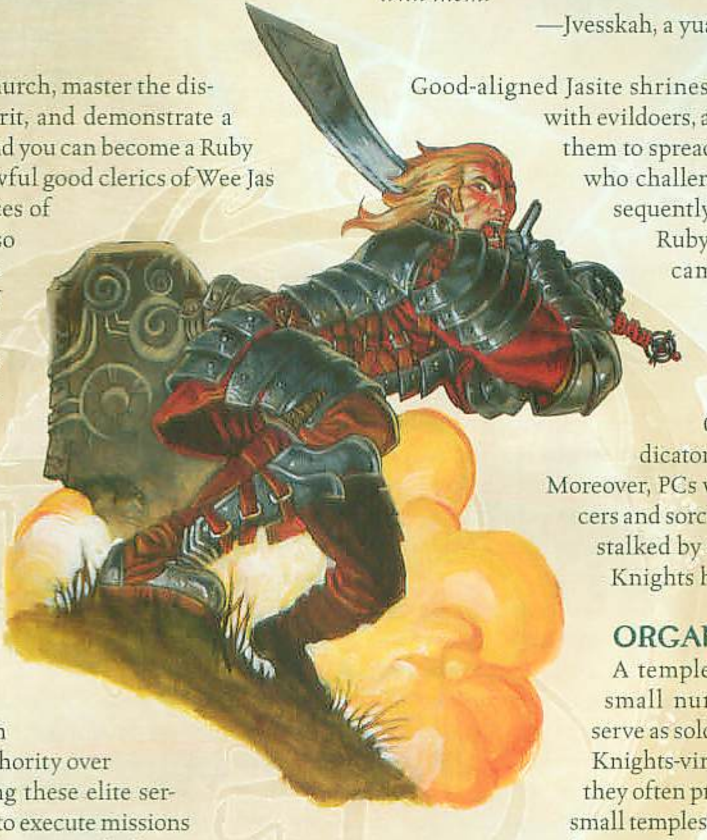
### COMBAT

Unlike an assassin, a Ruby Knight doesn't go out of his way to hide from his enemies unless the mission at hand requires stealth or subterfuge. In general, you want your enemies to see you coming. You want them to tremble with fear as you close in for the kill. That said, you don't want to plunge headlong into combat without first observing your foes and analyzing the tactical situation. Wise knights-vindicator strike when doing so is most advantageous to them, not when their enemies clearly have a tactical edge. Your sword is mightier than any pen, and you aren't brought in to negotiate with your quarry.

You rely on your Shadow Hand stances and maneuvers to approach your foes unseen, launch devastating attacks from hiding, and confuse and befuddle those who stand between

Illus. by S. Ellis

you and your target. As a student of the Devoted Spirit and Stone Dragon disciplines, you favor melee combat over ranged combat. You rely on your mastery of various maneuvers to beat your hated foes into submission or into an early grave. A stance that will serve you well against enemies of the faith includes martial spirit (to keep you alive). At higher levels, consider the daunting strike maneuver or the aura of perfect order stance.



*Ereth Nazbek,*
*Ruby Knight vindicator*

## ADVANCEMENT

Prove your loyalty to the church, master the discipline of the Devoted Spirit, and demonstrate a predilection for violence, and you can become a Ruby Knight vindicator. Even lawful good clerics of Wee Jas can benefit from the services of a Ruby Knight vindicator, so the profession imposes no alignment restrictions. If the church to which you belong recognizes your skills as a vindicator, you are considered part of the order.

A large chapter of Ruby Knights usually has its own hierarchy, and as a member of the order, you might receive missions from a superior member of the order instead of a cleric of the church proper. More likely, the order to which you belong exercises no authority over knights-vindicator, allowing these elite servants of the Witch Goddess to execute missions where and when they see fit. You might be respected in the order for your accomplishments, but you have no superiors or subordinates. Most knights-vindicator aren't concerned about advancement within the order or the church; they are content simply to act in the church's best interests when called upon to do so. The Ruby Knight order has no membership fees.

The greatest benefit of an order of Ruby Knights is the opportunity to train and confer with others who have mastered the Devoted Spirit discipline and who share a similar fanatical devotion to the cause.

## RESOURCES

Ruby Knight vindicators are loners for the most part. As a member of the class, you are expected to provide for yourself and purchase your own gear. Many knights-vindicator take jobs outside the church and use these as "cover" while keeping a low profile. Some Ruby Knight vindicators feel compelled to donate a portion of their amassed wealth to the church, but the church never requires you to do so. Your faithful service is reward enough.

If your church feels that you need a specific item to complete a mission, the item will be provided to you at no cost. Unless the item is disposable, such as a potion, the church will expect you to return it once the mission is completed.

# RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATORS IN THE WORLD

*"Shadow and steel! Cross the church, and you'll have to deal with them!"*

—Jvesskah, a yuan-ti crimelord in Sasserine

Good-aligned Jasite shrines use Ruby Knights to deal with evildoers, and evil-aligned temples use them to spread fear and eliminate anyone who challenges their dominance. Consequently, it's a simple matter to drop Ruby Knights into your existing campaign. Just because they haven't shown up before doesn't mean they don't exist. When not executing missions for the Witch Goddess, Ruby Knight vindicators tend to keep low profiles. Moreover, PCs who oppose evil necromancers and sorcerers might find themselves stalked by one or more fanatical Ruby Knights hungry for vengeance.

## ORGANIZATION

A temple of Wee Jas usually has a small number of Ruby Knights to serve as soldiers, guards, and enforcers. Knights-vindicator are more scarce, and they often protect the interests of several small temples scattered over a wide area. A modest temple in a small city can get by with one knight-vindicator, while a large temple in a large city or metropolis might support a small chapter of knights-vindicator. A typical chapter has 2d4+4 members, all of whom have at least one level in the Ruby Knight vindicator prestige class. Some chapters have a hierarchy (with the more experienced members overseeing the less experienced ones), but most are loose gatherings of like-minded fanatics who occasionally train together.

Some chapters of knights-vindicator have special hallmarks, but most orders allow members to exercise their individual discretion, so it's more likely for certain members of an order to have unique "calling cards."

## NPC REACTIONS

A Ruby Knight vindicator strives to maintain a life separate from the affairs of the church. Whether he plunders dungeons or trims rose bushes for a living, he's more likely to garner reactions based on such pursuits than for being a zealous thug who occasionally handles important jobs for his church.

Within his church, a vindicator is a silent shadow. Low-ranking members of the church might not grasp the function he serves or the skills he provides, and fewer still can truly appreciate the terror he sows. High-ranking clerics regard a Ruby Knight vindicator as a necessary evil, but they have good reason to fear him for the havoc he wreaks abroad. A vindicator sees things with sublime clarity and believes in his cause so fervently that clergy members who do not share his unswerving conviction are left to wonder whether the church needs and can control such terrible weapons.

## RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATOR LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) can research the Ruby Knights to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** The Ruby Knights are the knights-templar of Wee Jas's faith. They are temple guards, advisors, and bodyguards to senior clerics, as well as soldiers who serve the Witch Goddess.

**DC 15:** There are different ranks and titles within the Ruby Knight hierarchy, including knights-vindicator. They take on missions that the church doesn't want the community to know about. Most vindicators are overzealous thugs, punishing those who oppose their church or cause.

**DC 20:** Ruby Knight vindicators primarily practice the martial disciplines of Devoted Spirit and Shadow Hand. These disciplines help the knight harness his spiritual strength and zealous devotion, as well as give him the ability to strike with stealth and subtlety.

**DC 30:** Ruby Knight vindicators generally work alone, although they cultivate a network of associates outside the church. Once in a while, a chapter of knights backed by a powerful or wealthy temple rears its ugly head, and woe be to anyone who incurs that temple's wrath.

## RUBY KNIGHT VINDICATORS IN THE GAME

Players who enjoy playing crusaders or paladins with a dark side or shady bent should find the Ruby Knight vindicator both exciting and fulfilling. Knights-vindicator gain the ability to use Shadow Hand maneuvers and stances, and the duties of the class do not interfere with a character's more adventurous pursuits. For the most part, a vindicator is free to do as he pleases, and when the faith beckons him, he helps out freely.

### ADAPTATION

Although this prestige class is specific to a single crusader order—the Ruby Knights of Wee Jas—you could easily adapt it to crusaders devoted to almost any other deity. For example, the faiths of Hextor, Vecna, or St. Cuthbert could easily support secret vindicator organizations. If you replace the requirement for Devoted Spirit stances and maneuvers with another martial discipline (Iron Heart or Tiger Claw, for instance), it becomes much easier to qualify for the class without being a crusader—which means that you could create holy (or unholy) orders of warblade/clerics, fighter/clerics, or rogue/clerics.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Characters who undertake a quest of importance to Wee Jas's faith or find themselves sharing a common enemy with the Jasite clerics might work alongside a Ruby Knight vindicator, particularly if their objectives mesh. For example, characters infiltrating the lair of an evil cult might encounter a Ruby Knight vindicator assigned by his church to eliminate the cult's nefarious leader.

Similarly, it's easy to imagine the PCs running afoul of an evil-aligned temple of Wee Jas, and facing the wrath of a Ruby Knight vindicator (or group of vindicators) who appears on the scene to dispatch them.

**EL 8:** Ereth Nazbek keeps watch over a necropolis buried near a small town. Long ago, vampires killed his parents, and the horror of the ordeal transformed him from a wide-eyed farmer's son to a dour champion of law. For now he tends to a small farm and enjoys the simple pleasures of life, but he maintains a vigilant watch over the hidden vaults and makes sure that ill-intentioned strangers don't unleash a plague of undead over the area. Ereth has a wife, Izabel, and two well-behaved young sons, Kalven and Errol. Farm life keeps him fit, but Ereth does not look or act like your typical rustic farmer. He stands well over 6 feet tall, has intimidating good looks and muscular development, and speaks with careful precision. Only his wife knows of the service he provides the church.

Given time to prepare for battle, Ereth drinks a *potion of bear's endurance* and casts *shield of faith* on himself before entering combat. Once he corners his quarry, he enters a martial spirit stance and attacks his foe using whatever strikes are granted to him at the time (favoring higher-level maneuvers first over lower-level ones). While he is in the martial spirit stance, he expends turn undead attempts to use his divine recovery abilities.

#### ERETH NAZBEK CR 8

Male human crusader 4/cleric 1/Ruby Knight vindicator 3
LN Medium humanoid
**Init** +3; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
**Aura** lawful (faint)
**Languages** Common, Orc

**AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (–1 Dex, +7 armor)
**hp** 39 (8 HD)
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +10; zealous surge

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares), base 30 ft.
**Melee** +1 *falchion* +12/+7 (2d4+7/18–20)
**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +7/+2 (1d8+4/×3)
**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +11
**Atk Options** Blade Meditation (Devoted Spirit), Blind-Fight, divine recovery, furious counterstrike, steely resolve 10
**Special Actions** *protective ward* 1/day (+1, lasts 1 hour), turn undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+3 HD, 1st)
**Combat Gear** 2 *potions of bear's endurance*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*
**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 7th):
*Stances*—bolstering voice (1st), martial spirit (1st), thicket of blades (3rd)
*Strikes*—charging minotaur† (1st), crusader's strike† (1st), douse the flames (1st), entangling blade†

(4th), foehammer† (2nd), stone bones (1st), vanguard strike† (1st)
*Disciplines:* Devoted Spirit, Stone Dragon, White Raven
† Readied maneuver
**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd):
2nd—*align weapon, hold person* (Will DC 14), *shield other*$^{D}$
1st—*bane* (Will DC 13), *divine favor, sanctuary*$^{D}$, *shield of faith*
0—*detect magic, guidance, light, read magic*
D: Domain spell. *Deity:* St. Cuthbert. *Domains:* Destruction, Protection.

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**Abilities** Str 18, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14
**Feats** Blade Meditation (Devoted Spirit), Blind-Fight, Devoted Bulwark, Improved Initiative
**Skills** Concentration +11, Diplomacy +7, Heal +4, Hide –2, Intimidate +15, Jump +3, Knowledge (religion) +9, Martial Lore +9, Ride +4, Sense Motive +4
**Possessions** combat gear plus *+1 banded mail, +1 falchion, gauntlets of ogre power,* masterwork composite longbow (+4 Str), quiver with 20 arrows, two platinum rings (50 gp each; foci for *shield other* spell), pouch containing 24 gp

# SHADOW SUN NINJA

*"Even the brightest light must cast a shadow."*
—Doomveil, initiate of the Shadow Sun clan

A Shadow Sun ninja is a martial artist who studies the balance between good and evil, light and dark. Founded by a reformed half-fiend, this fighting school teaches its students to find power in balance. A Shadow Sun ninja uses dark energies to drain his foe's life, but then turns and uses the power of light to lend that stolen strength to an ally. A Shadow Sun ninja is a study in contrasts. She knows that evil lurks in the hearts of all living creatures. Even the purest of the pure suffer temptation. By exploring her inner demons, bringing them into the light, and accepting them as part of her soul, she achieves a deeper understanding of herself and the strength within her. A Shadow Sun ninja would argue that denying, rather than accepting, one's base impulses would be the same as refusing to use one's left arm.

## BECOMING A SHADOW SUN NINJA

Most Shadow Sun ninjas are monks or ninjas (see *Complete Adventurer*) who have studied the Setting Sun and Shadow Hand martial disciplines. In some cases, a swordsage enters this class. A rogue or fighter who studied those two disciplines is also eligible for this class, but such characters usually lack the unarmed fighting abilities that this class demands.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

**Alignment:** Any good.
**Base Attack Bonus:** +3.
**Skills:** Hide 8 ranks.
**Feats:** Improved Unarmed Strike.
**Martial Maneuvers:** Must know one 2nd-level Setting Sun or Shadow Hand maneuver, one Setting Sun maneuver of any level, and one Shadow Hand maneuver of any level.

## CLASS FEATURES

A Shadow Sun ninja is a stealthy, unarmed warrior who draws on the power of light and dark. Many of her abilities come in two forms. She must use the first form of a power before she can use the second. A Shadow Sun ninja cloaks herself in darkness to hide from her enemies, then leaps from the shadows with a burst of light to blind her foes.

**Maneuvers:** At 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, you gain one new maneuver known from the Setting Sun or Shadow Hand disciplines. You must meet a maneuver's prerequisite to learn it. You add your full Shadow Sun ninja levels to your initiator level to determine your total initiator level and your highest-level maneuvers known.

At 5th level and 10th level, you gain an additional maneuver readied per day.

**Stances Known:** At 5th level, you learn a new martial stance from the Setting Sun or Shadow Hand disciplines. You must meet a stance's prerequisite to learn it.

**Monk Abilities:** Your add your class level to your monk level to determine your class-based AC bonus, unarmed damage, unarmored speed bonus, penalty on your attacks when using your flurry of blows ability, and the number of daily attempts of your Stunning Fist feat.

If you have no monk levels, you gain the AC bonus of a monk whose level equals your Shadow Sun ninja level. In addition, you gain additional uses of the Stunning Fist feat as a monk. (Your non-monk, non-Shadow Sun ninja class levels provide one use per four levels and your monk, and Shadow Sun ninja class levels provide one use per level.)

You do not count your class levels for the purpose of determining when you gain any other monk class features, such as bonus feats, evasion, or other special abilities.

**Touch of the Shadow Sun (Su):** A Shadow Sun ninja strikes a careful balance between light and dark, good and evil. Although your heart is dedicated to good, you know that the shadow of evil will always be a part of you. This realization, along with careful control of your *ki* energy, allows you to wield the energy of both the dark and light aspects of your being. This understanding and mastery allows you to deal damage with one attack, then turn and heal an ally with the reverse of that harmful energy.

With a melee touch attack made as a standard action, you can deal negative energy damage equal to your base unarmed damage + your Wis modifier. Note that undead are healed by this attack, since it uses negative energy.

In the round after you use this ability, you can touch a creature as a standard action and heal an amount of damage equal to the damage you dealt with your negative energy touch on the previous round. If the target of this healing touch makes no effort to prevent you from touching him, you can touch the creature as a swift action.

You cannot use both aspects of this ability on the same round, nor can you use the negative energy touch again in a round after you have already successfully used it. After you channel negative energy into a creature, you convert that energy into a positive energy charge that prevents you from using the negative energy aspect of this ability until the positive energy has been discharged.

### Table 5–8: The Shadow Sun Ninja Hit Die: d8

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Maneuvers Known | Maneuvers Readied | Stances Known | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +2 | +2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Monk abilities, touch of the Shadow Sun |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +3 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Flame of the Shadow Sun |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +3 | +3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Light within darkness |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +4 | +4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | Darkness within light |
| 6th | +4 | +5 | +5 | +5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 7th | +5 | +5 | +5 | +5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Void of the Shadow Sun |
| 8th | +6 | +6 | +6 | +6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Child of shadow and light |
| 9th | +6 | +6 | +6 | +6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | — |
| 10th | +7 | +7 | +7 | +7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Balance of light and dark |

**Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level):** Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (the planes), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Martial Lore*, Move Silently, Perform, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot, Swim, and Tumble.

*New skill described on page 28.

**Flame of the Shadow Sun (Su):** Beginning at 2nd level, you can create a protective cloak of negative energy by using your *ki*. This cloak absorbs cold damage. You can then gather this energy, transform it, and unleash it as a searing attack.

As an immediate action, you can shroud yourself in shimmering, dark energy that provides resistance to cold 10 until the start of your next turn. If this resistance reduces the damage you take from any attack or effect, you can take a swift action on your next turn to hurl a bolt of fiery energy with a range of 60 feet. This bolt requires a ranged touch attack to hit and deals 2d6 points of fire damage.

**Light within Darkness (Su):** From 4th level on, the darkness cannot muffle your inner light. Rather, the shadows cause it to seethe and roil as the light within you struggles to break free.

If you make a melee attack against an opponent on the round after you make a successful Hide check, you burst into a searing corona of light. All opponents within 60 feet of you that failed to detect you while you were hiding must make Fortitude saves (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Wis modifier) or be blinded for 1 round. Creatures who are aware of the ninja, such as those who made successful Spot checks to notice her, are unaffected by this attack.

**Darkness within Light (Su):** You know that while light cannot exist without darkness, the opposite is also true. By focusing your *ki* and closing your eyes, you view the world in a vague, shadowy form. Those also trapped within darkness appear clear and distinct before you.

Starting at 5th level, you can close your eyes and willfully ignore any other senses that confer the ability to pinpoint the location of a creature (such as blindsense, blindsight, and scent). You become effectively blinded, but you gain a special benefit on attacks made against targets that are also blinded or effectively blinded. Against such foes, you ignore the drawbacks for fighting while blinded. Instead, you gain a +4 bonus on melee attack rolls and a +4 bonus on melee damage rolls against such enemies. In addition, if you have the Stunning Fist feat, blinded opponents take a –2 penalty on their saves to resist your stunning attacks.

You suffer the penalties for being blinded and deafened until the start of your next turn. The blindness cannot be negated through any means, magical or mundane, until that time. You gain the benefit of this ability if you willingly turn off your sense of sight or if some effect, such as a *blindness* spell, robs you of your sight.

**Void of the Shadow Sun (Su):** You eventually learn to draw upon the power of light to shield you from attacks. Even if an opponent manages to breach this shield, it is not destroyed. Rather than fade away, the shield shifts into an aura of icy cold, black energy that can harm your enemies.

Starting at 7th level, as a swift action you can wreath yourself in a halo of bright, flaming light. You gain a +2 deflection bonus to AC. This ability lasts until the start of your next turn. If an opponent successfully hits you despite your improved AC, you lose the deflection bonus to AC and you cannot use this ability again on your next turn. However, you can project a pulse of frigid, black energy in a 30-foot-radius burst around you as a standard action in the round after your shield is pierced. Enemies in this area take 8d6 points of cold damage, with a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Wis modifier) for half damage.

**Child of Shadow and Light (Su):** As you learn to harness the power of your *ki*, you become capable of spilling forth light and dark energy. Beginning at 8th level, you can focus your power, engulfing the area around you in alternating patterns of light and dark.

While you are in a Setting Sun or Shadow Hand stance, you can forgo its normal benefit as a swift action to gain the effect of child of shadow and light. This ability lasts as long as you would maintain the Setting Sun or Shadow Hand stance, or as described below. You can also stop using child of shadow and light and resume gaining the normal benefit of the stance as a swift action.

If you use this ability to exert light energy, the area around you fills with blinding light. All enemies within a 60-foot-radius burst become dazzled (DMG 300) for 1 round. This is a 9th-level spell for purposes of determining how it interacts with magical darkness.

If you exert dark energy, the area around you is cast into total darkness for 1 round in a 60-foot-radius burst. This ability is considered a 9th-level spell for the purpose of determining how it interacts with magical light.

As long as you maintain this stance, you alternate between projecting light and darkness. If this ability is active at the beginning of your turn, its effects reverse. If it projects light, it now projects darkness, and vice versa.

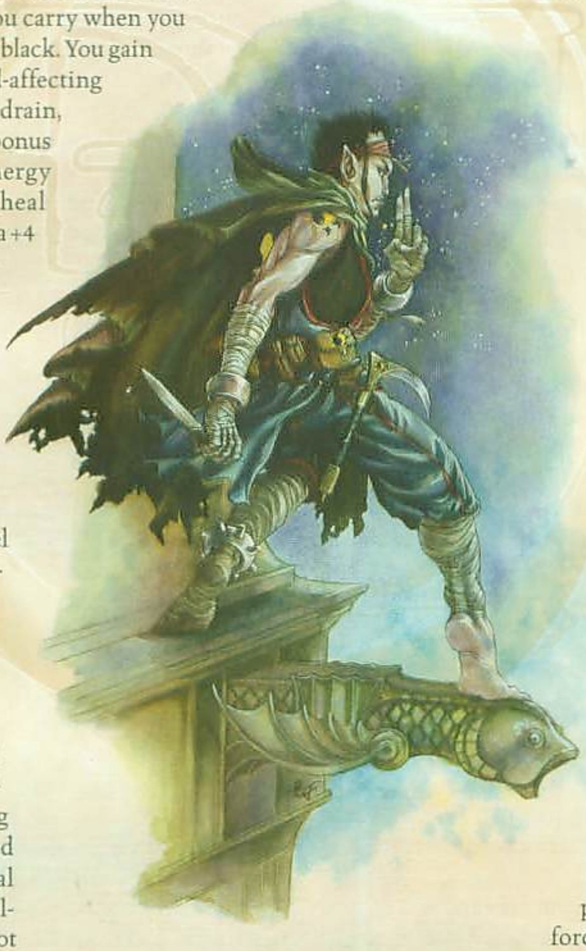
You cannot activate this ability in the same round in which you end its effect.

**Balance of Light and Dark (Su):** As a Shadow Sun ninja, you strive to control your dark side, even as you use it to power your martial arts. Sometimes, particularly when you face a truly daunting foe, you can allow your inner shadow to run rampant. In such cases, you undergo a terrible transformation. When you adopt this wrathful battle aspect, your foes are doomed. Yet, each time you use this ability, you teeter closer to damnation.

At 10th level, once per day as a swift action, you can transform into a creature of pure darkness for 1 minute. Your body and all items you carry when you transform become a deep, inky black. You gain immunity to critical hits, mind-affecting abilities, death attacks, energy drain, and poison. You also gain a +8 bonus on Hide checks. Negative energy attacks, such as *inflict* spells, heal rather than harm you. You gain a +4 bonus on attacks against creatures in areas of darkness or shadowy illumination.

In addition to these benefits, with each successful unarmed attack you make, you can choose to bestow one negative level on your opponent. You heal 5 points of damage for each negative level you bestow. These negative levels disappear in 1 hour.

If the subject has at least as many negative levels as HD, it dies. Each negative level gives a creature a –1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks, and effective level (for determining the power, duration, DC, and other details of spells or special abilities). Additionally, a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from her highest available level. Negative levels stack.



*Doomveil the Shadow Sun ninja*

*Illus. by E. Fiegenschuh*

At the end of your transformation, you take 1 point of Constitution damage per negative level you bestowed. If this damage drops your Constitution to 0 or lower, your body dissipates into an inky cloud. Unless you are restored to life by *true resurrection*, you rise in 1d4 days as a vampire. Your alignment becomes evil, though your alignment on the law–chaos axis remains the same. You are now a dedicated champion of evil and an NPC. You retain access to all your abilities in this prestige class and lack a normal vampire's vulnerability to sunlight. Your vampiric body forms in the spot where your mortal form perished.

Legend holds that the souls of Shadow Sun ninjas who are corrupted in this manner are imprisoned within the Iron City of Dis, Dispater's capital within the depths of Hell. A successful quest to free the soul from its prison cell destroys the vampire and restores the Shadow Sun ninja to life. Legend holds that several mighty Shadow Sun heroes languish within Dispater's prison, waiting to be freed.

## PLAYING A SHADOW SUN NINJA

As a Shadow Sun ninja, you walk the line between good and evil. You have seen the darkness that lurks within your own heart. As a heroic soul, you know that if darkness rests in you, it must dwell in every mortal's heart. You are naturally suspicious of others and prone to seek out hidden threats. Even while sitting in the midst of your companions in the warmest and welcoming of environments, you feel the darkness clawing at your soul, and you see the lurking evil that waits in the hearts of all creatures.

You pursue good for its own sake. If you arrive in a town beset by evil and drive out or slay the villains, you are likely to leave without saying a word or making any effort to gather acclaim or befriend those you saved. A few months later, you might return and ensure that your good deeds have endured. You know that when evil falls, people who were good and welcoming when you left might have turned to tyranny in your absence.

Once you have completed your training and left the Shadow Sun enclave where you learned the order's secrets, you can expect little contact with other ninjas. The process of joining the Shadow Suns forces you to look at the worst parts of your soul without flinching. Although the ninjas of this order are strong enough to endure such trials, few of them wish to be reminded of them. Shadow Sun dojos are usually austere, isolated places with the ambience of a graveyard or a tomb. Only the Shadowspeaker, the dojo's head trainer and master, dwells there on a permanent basis. A Shadow Sun ninja seeks a Shadowspeaker's advice only under the most pressing circumstances.

## COMBAT

In battle, you alternate between stealth and a vicious, frontal assault. Your training focuses on the duality of your soul, and this comes through in your tactics. Many of your abilities shift between light and dark effects. Thus, you might lurk in the shadows to take advantage of darkness abilities, then leap into the fray to bathe your opponents in avenging light. As the shadow returns, you slip away to start the process again.

The Spring Attack feat is an excellent choice for you, as is Blind-Fight. Darkness shrouds you, but you have no special ability to see through it. A magic item that grants darkvision provides you with an important edge. The original Shadow Sun ninjas were half-orcs and half-demons. When they developed this fighting style, they gave little thought to creatures who were blind in the dark.

## ADVANCEMENT

Those who seek the Shadow Sun path are usually tormented by some deep divide within their personalities. If you join this prestige class, you are likely no different. Half-orcs who struggle to walk a righteous path despite racially motivated hatred and taunts find the Shadow Sun path appealing, particularly if those same individuals already follow the monk's path and make an effort to control the darkness that lies within them.

Once you join the Shadow Sun order and master its basic teachings (in game terms, take 1st level in this class), you are on your own. The path of the Shadow Sun is one meant for the individual. Others cannot help you find the balance between your good and evil natures. Only you can achieve this. Some Shadow Sun ninjas never again cross paths with a member of this order once they leave their dojo.

As mentioned above, Spring Attack and Blind-Fight are excellent feat choices for members of this prestige class. You should also consider gaining ranks in Hide, Move Silently, Tumble, and Balance. These skills allow you to move about the battlefield more easily.

## RESOURCES

Shadow Sun ninjas rely only upon themselves. Some of them long for the companionship of good, reliable friends. Thus, they frequently join with heroic adventuring bands to fight injustice. However, Shadow Sun ninjas rarely develop deep friendships.

Many Shadow Sun ninjas adopt new names to reflect the path they walk. A ninja uses this name when dealing with others but sometimes, when she forms a particularly close bond with an ally, she might share her birth name. This act shows deep trust and faith. To a Shadow Sun ninja, her old name represents the turmoil that raged within her before she learned to control her dark side. In essence, a ninja is giving her companion the name of the dark twin that resides within her soul. When a Shadow Sun ninja overextends her powers and falls into darkness, the vampire that arises in her place typically uses her birth name.

# SHADOW SUN NINJAS IN THE WORLD

*"The pedestal lies empty because she never told us her name, nor would she sit to allow us to capture her form in stone. Even if she doesn't want to be remembered, we will sing of her deeds. It isn't every year that a hero slays a dragon."*

—Ardas Runemorn, Thane of the Eight Peak Spire

Shadow Sun ninjas rarely gather in large numbers, walk the land in anonymity, and train in remote, inhospitable outposts. Thus, adding them to your campaign is relatively easy. They could be active in a region for years, but little lore about them exists aside from tales of nameless strangers who appear, defeat evil, and fade back into the night.

A character who might pursue this path is most likely to discover the Shadow Sun ninjas by accident. For example, a Shadow Sun ninja might, if she sees a prospective member, secretly place a map to the nearest dojo within the possible ninja's possessions. If the petitioner can reach the dojo and survive the training, she becomes a ninja. Many Shadow Sun warriors don't even know the identities of the ninjas who set them along this path.

## ORGANIZATION

The Shadow Sun ninjas lack a formal, complex organization. They are wanderers and loners. At times, a Shadowspeaker might send word to all the Shadow Sun ninjas he trained. This event comes to pass only when the Shadowspeaker rests on death's door, in which case the ninjas choose a new Shadowspeaker from among their ranks, or if a great evil has arisen. Such gatherings to defeat an evil being, called shadow hunts, happen perhaps once each century. If an evil power is mighty enough to demand such attention, few of the Shadow Sun ninjas are likely to survive the battle against it.

The Shadow Sun ninjas lack any recorded history, aside from a few rare scrolls that compile information on the enemies they face. In the aftermath of a shadow hunt, the survivors build an elaborate tomb for their fallen comrades, record the events of their deaths, and store scrolls describing the evil they faced for the benefit of future generations. To avoid grave robbers and other despoilers, the Shadow Sun ninjas usually build these tombs far from civilization. If the need is great enough, the ninjas share the location of these tombs with those who would benefit from the information hidden in them.

## NPC REACTIONS

Shadow Sun ninjas rarely provoke an extreme reaction, since few know of their true nature, their powers, and their goals. Members of this order are happiest when they can perform their deeds with few complications and little or no attention. Most common folk regard the ninjas as slightly intimidating. Their quiet, reserved manner, combined with their great fighting talent, makes them vaguely menacing. Some towns and cities drive off Shadow Sun ninjas for fear that they consort with evil powers. The ninjas typically avoid such locations, but should evil arise in one of them, they might simply work in secret.

## SHADOW SUN LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can research Shadow Sun ninjas to learn more about them. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

**DC 10:** Shadow Sun ninjas are loners who fight evil on their own terms.

**DC 15:** Supposedly, these ninjas use the powers of darkness against their enemies.

**DC 20:** Shadow Sun ninjas harness both dark and light in battle. This represents the competition in their own souls between their good and evil aspects. They are heroic, but they draw their power by skirting close to the powers of evil.

One does not find a Shadow Sun ninja. Rather, a ninja finds you. Sometimes, gangs of toughs pose as members of this prestige class to strike terror in commoners and other weak folk. Such antics end quickly if a real Shadow Sun ninja hears of them.

## SHADOW SUN NINJAS IN THE GAME

A Shadow Sun ninja works well as a mysterious, perhaps untrustworthy NPC who allies with the characters against a powerful, supernatural threat. A wandering ninja might know something about a demon's weaknesses, and the PCs must work with him to overcome the monster. However, the ninja's tendency toward suspicion makes her relationship with the party icy at best. The characters must decide whether to trust the ninja or strike out on their own. A villain might pose as a Shadow Sun ninja, using the order's mysterious nature to cloak his true nature.

This prestige class is a good choice for a player who likes a character with a tragic backstory. Many Shadow Sun ninjas seek to escape a tragedy or mistake in their past. A PC laboring under a dreadful curse, or one who is secretly a reformed villain, is a good match for this class.

### ADAPTATION

The word "ninja" strikes many DMs as an anachronism, or at least a misplaced cultural element, in the D&D game world. This prestige class could also represent an order of monster hunters, a band of good-aligned assassins that strikes down evildoers, or a martial art taught by a specific, isolated monastery. The key trait in this prestige class is the struggle between light and dark that lies at its center. The rest of the description is merely meant to inspire. If the descriptions don't work for you, think of any races, religious orders, and other aspects of your campaign where the struggle between light and dark would be a good fit.

### SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

The PCs are likely to encounter a Shadow Sun ninja at any time they fight against an evil force that threatens the land.

**EL 8:** Doomveil is a half-orc Shadow Sun ninja who seeks to right the wrongs she committed in the past. Once, she was a member of an evil monastic order dedicated to Hextor. Born and raised in the monastery, she never knew anything beyond combat training, devotional prayers to Hextor, and the occasional raid to quash a peasant uprising in the conquered land around monastery. During one such raid, she met a cleric of Pelor who, recognizing the fundamental spark of good within her soul, convinced her to turn aside her evil ways. Since then, Doomveil has trained as a Shadow Sun ninja. If the characters fight against Hextor and his minions, they might find her lurking at the edge of their struggle. She provides assistance by passing along intelligence she gathers, scouting Hextor's temples in disguise, and so forth. If the characters are close to victory, she offers her direct assistance to aid them.

**DOOMVEIL** **CR 8**

Female half-orc monk 6/Shadow Sun ninja 2
AL LG Medium humanoid (orc)
**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3
**Languages** Common, Orc

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**AC** 19, touch 16, flat-footed 17;
(+2 Dex, +3 Wis, +1 class, +2 armor, +1 natural)
**hp** 55 (8 HD)
**Immune** normal disease
**Resist** evasion, cold 10 (flame of the shadow sun)
**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12 (+14 against enchantments)

---

**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares)
**Melee** unarmed strike +7 (1d10+2) or
**Melee** unarmed strike +6/+6 (1d10+2) with flurry of blows or
**Melee** mwk kama +8 (1d6+2) or
**Melee** touch +7 (1d10+3 negative energy) with touch of the shadow sun
**Ranged** touch +7 (2d6 fire) with flame of the shadow sun or
**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)
**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +7
**Atk Options** Stunning Fist (DC 17, 6/day), flame of the shadow sun, *ki* strike (magic), touch of the shadow sun
**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*

---

**Maneuvers Known** (IL 5th):
*Strikes*—mighty throw† (1st), shadow blade technique (1st)
*Counters*—baffling defense† (2nd)
*Other*—shadow jaunt† (2nd)
*Disciplines:* Setting Sun, Shadow Hand
† Readied maneuver

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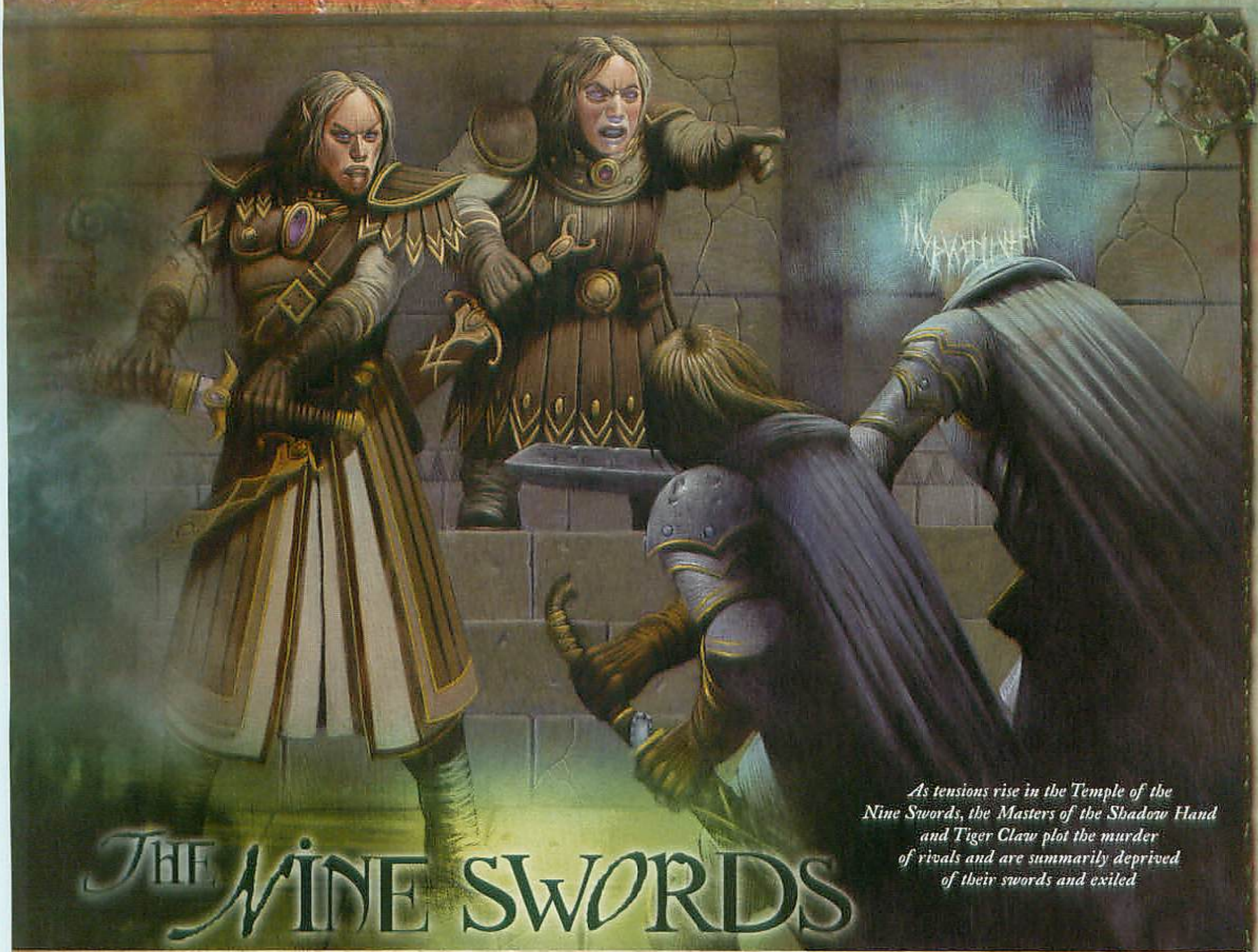
**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 8
**SQ** slow fall 30 ft.
**Feats** Deflect Arrows$^{B}$, Improved Disarm$^{B}$, Improved Unarmed Strike$^{B}$, Martial Study (mighty throw), Martial Study (shadow blade technique), Martial Study (shadow jaunt), Stunning Fist$^{B}$
**Skills** Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +14
**Possessions** combat gear plus masterwork kama, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *bracers of armor +2, amulet of natural armor +1, brooch of shielding, cloak of resistance +1*

# THE NINE SWORDS



*As tensions rise in the Temple of the Nine Swords, the Masters of the Shadow Hand and Tiger Claw plot the murder of rivals and are summarily deprived of their swords and exiled*

The nine swords—weapons specifically crafted to embody each of the martial disciplines—are more than simple legends. They are relics that remain hidden somewhere in the world. Many martial adepts spend a great deal of time seeking out these weapons because each grants its wielder tremendous power and artistry in his chosen combat style.

## WEAPONS OF LEGACY

A weapon of legacy has the capacity to grow in power as its wielder advances in level. Ideally, a character would carry and cherish the same weapon throughout his entire career.

Initially, a weapon of legacy might seem like nothing more than a standard magic item. Only when the wielder learns something of its past does he begin to understand that his weapon holds untapped potential. Uncovering the weapon's history provides him with the keys that unlock its power.

The information on legacy weapons provided here is brief, but it should be sufficient for you to use the weapons featured in this book. For more details on incorporating legacy weapons into your campaign, consult *Weapons of Legacy*.

**Name and Description:** Each legacy weapon description begins with the physical features of the item. Assuming the character doesn't already know the weapon's name, it can be determined with a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** Every legacy weapon has certain magical properties that are accessible to any character. Information on those powers can be gleaned through the normal methods of identifying magic items. The cost given here is for a normal magic item of the legacy weapon's kind, assuming that its true status is still unknown. In fact, however, legacy weapons are priceless.

*Omen:* Every legacy item has an omen, a minor power that makes the item recognizable as something special.

**History:** Every legacy weapon has a history, which might have been obscured by time. In its story are seeds of opportunity that a new wielder can exploit. Through research,

*Illus. by W. England*

a character can learn what specific rites, procedures, or ceremonies are necessary to bond with a weapon and unlock its powers.

Learning a piece of a weapon's past requires a Knowledge (history) check, with increasingly difficult DCs for more esoteric or pertinent facts. If anyone succeeds on such a check and communicates the relevant information to the wielder, he can uncover the ritual associated with that part of the weapon's legacy. The skill check DC and the ritual gleaned from a successful check appear parenthetically at the end of each relevant paragraph in a weapon's history.

**Legacy Rituals:** Every legacy weapon in this book has three rituals associated with it: a least, a lesser, and a greater ritual. In addition to any tasks required, every legacy ritual has a gold piece cost for materials expended during its performance. Performing these rituals grants access to a weapon's least, lesser, and greater abilities, respectively.

A wielder who meets a weapon's requirements (see below) and completes the least legacy ritual can use that legacy weapon's least abilities. With each additional ritual completed, a new range of legacy abilities becomes available.

Each legacy ability also has a minimum character level associated with it. A character below this level can complete a ritual, but he can't use the corresponding legacy ability until he reaches the required level.

**Wielder Requirements:** In much the same way as meeting the requirements for entry into a prestige class, each prospective wielder of a legacy weapon must meet certain requirements to perform any legacy ritual associated with it, or to use any of its legacy abilities. These requirements need not be met for the character to use the item's nonlegacy abilities.

**Personal Costs:** In addition to performing a ritual and paying its gp cost, the wielder must willingly pay the indicated personal costs—such as hit point loss or penalties on saving throws—to use a legacy weapon's abilities. These personal costs are permanent and represent the weapon tapping into its wielder's vital energy to unlock its full potential. Each weapon has different personal costs.

The wielder must pay the personal cost immediately upon reaching the character level at which it is assessed, after all other level-related adjustments. If he is unable to pay the cost, he does not gain any legacy abilities associated with that level until he can pay. The costs apply whether or not the character is actively wielding the legacy weapon.

Unless otherwise noted, multiple values in the same column are not cumulative. In each case, they represent the total penalty applied.

*Attack Penalty:* This value represents a permanent penalty on all the wielder's attack rolls.

*Save Penalty:* This value represents a permanent penalty on the wielder's saving throws. Unless the column's header notes a specific save, the penalty applies to all saves.

*Hit Point Loss:* The wielder permanently loses the indicated number of hit points. These values are cumulative.

**Legacy Weapon Abilities:** Unless noted otherwise, a character must be holding the weapon to activate an ability, and activating a legacy ability is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Continuously active abilities are in effect as long as the character carries the weapon on his person.

The save DC for any legacy ability is equal to 10 + the level of the spell or effect + the minimum ability score needed to cast that level of spell, just as normal for magic items. The wielder's Charisma modifier can be substituted for the ability modifier normally used by the item, if the save DC result would be higher.

## DESERT WIND (DESERT WIND)

*Desert Wind* is a slender and graceful scimitar crafted of shining steel, lustrous ivory, and polished gold. Its hilt is set with brilliant blue sapphires and fiery red rubies.

**Note:** The original description of this weapon appeared in the *Weapons of Legacy* supplement. Here, it has been modified slightly to make it conform to the characteristics of the other eight discipline-founding swords. Even if you have *Weapons of Legacy*, the version described below is recommended if you are using any of the other rules from this book.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 scimitar;* Cost 2,315 gp; Weight 4 lb. On a successful attack, *Desert Wind* deals 1 point of fire damage in addition to its normal damage.

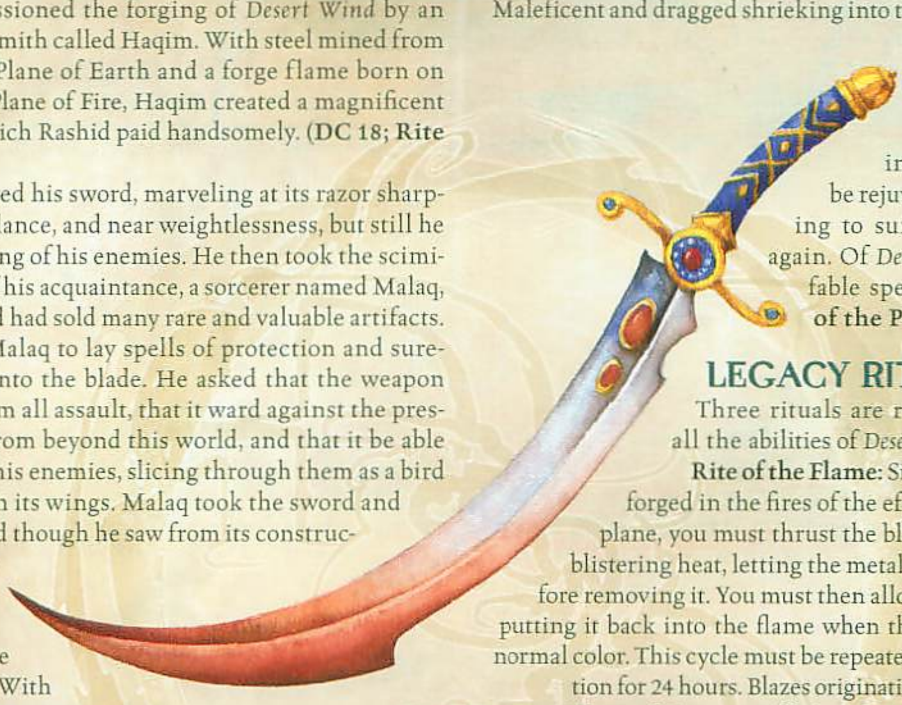
*Omen:* A soft, warm breeze briefly surrounds the wielder when he grasps *Desert Wind*'s hilt. The blade grows very hot when wielded in battle, glowing red or even white.

### HISTORY

The general design of *Desert Wind* suggests that its creator hailed from one of the great, semimythical cities of the southern deserts. In these metropolises, all citizens know powerful magic, and genies walk the streets alongside mortals. The communities are presided over by powerful caliphs and emirs, who rule with iron fists hidden within silken gloves of courtly intrigue and duplicity. *Desert Wind* was surely designed for such a wealthy noble, because no mere soldier could afford the finery of a blade such as this one. The fact that the scimitar is functional and beautiful shows that its owner was a discerning warrior, not one who carried a sword only for show. The dual themes of fire and air, reflected in the jeweled inlays and the gold embossing on the blade, hint at a possible supernatural origin for the sword, perhaps tied to the stories of the genies that dwell in the desert cities. **(DC 15)**

*Desert Wind* was commissioned by the emir Rashid ben Daoud, a wealthy and powerful merchant lord of the southern wastes. Rashid built his empire not on such paltry, mundane goods as gold and silver or exotic silks and spices, but on rare and precious spell components and magic artifacts from across the planes. Rashid compensated extraplanar adventurers amply for the retrieval of body parts from exotic outsiders, material from distant planar locales, and other rare sundries for which wizards were willing to pay a high price but unwilling to risk their own necks. Given the nature of his business, it is unsurprising that Rashid made several powerful enemies who would have delighted in the emir's death by slow torture. So Rashid hired the finest bodyguards that money could buy and filled his home with enough magical wards and traps to protect an entire lost city. On top of these precautions, in case all his defenses failed and his person was directly threatened, Rashid commissioned the forging of *Desert Wind* by an efreeti weaponsmith called Haqim. With steel mined from the Elemental Plane of Earth and a forge flame born on the Elemental Plane of Fire, Haqim created a magnificent scimitar, for which Rashid paid handsomely. **(DC 18; Rite of the Flame)**

Rashid received his sword, marveling at its razor sharpness, perfect balance, and near weightlessness, but still he feared the coming of his enemies. He then took the scimitar to a djinni of his acquaintance, a sorcerer named Malaq, to whom Rashid had sold many rare and valuable artifacts. Rashid asked Malaq to lay spells of protection and sureness in battle into the blade. He asked that the weapon defend him from all assault, that it ward against the presence of those from beyond this world, and that it be able to strike down his enemies, slicing through them as a bird cuts the air with its wings. Malaq took the sword and examined it, and though he saw from its construction that it was the work of the hated efreet, he agreed to the emir's request. With a coin made from a stone, a song stolen from dirt, and a knife from under the hills, Malaq wove his most powerful spells into the sword. The steel practically thrummed with power, scarcely able to contain the sorceries placed upon it. When at last the casting was done, Malaq swore that he had never performed such mighty magic and that Rashid was surely as safe as any man could be, with his protective wards, his capable bodyguards, and his sword crafted and ensorcelled by genies. Rashid took the sword and felt the awesome power singing within it. He paid generously for it. **(DC 25; Rite of the Clouds)**



*Desert Wind*

Though Rashid now possessed the finest sword among all the lords of the desert, this fantastic weapon was also his greatest folly. So much of his fortune had Rashid spent upon *Desert Wind* that he had no more money with which to pay his adventurers for their discoveries. With no remuneration forthcoming, Rashid's suppliers turned elsewhere to sell their goods. With no rare and powerful spell components to trade, Rashid had no money to pay his guards and servants. They all left him. With no servants to maintain them, Rashid's magical wards faltered and expired and his traps rusted and rotted, becoming useless. Soon, naught stood between Rashid and his enemies.

With nothing to hold them at bay, the outsiders from whom Rashid had profited began to close in on him. *Desert Wind*, once meant to be Rashid's last line of defense, was now his only protection. Mighty though the scimitar was, and skilled as Rashid was with a blade, he could not stand alone against his adversaries. He ran. The life of a pauper did not agree with Rashid, however, and he found he was incapable of earning coin to pay for his keep. At long last, he was cornered by agents of the devil prince Glornoth the Maleficent and dragged shrieking into the Nine Hells. Popular tales recount his fate—to be daily torn apart by devils harvesting his flesh, only to be rejuvenated each morning to suffer the same fate again. Of *Desert Wind*'s fate, no fable speaks. **(DC 31; Rite of the Pauper)**

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Desert Wind*.

**Rite of the Flame:** Since *Desert Wind* was forged in the fires of the efreeti Haqim's home plane, you must thrust the blade into a source of blistering heat, letting the metal grow white-hot before removing it. You must then allow the blade to cool, putting it back into the flame when the blade dims to its normal color. This cycle must be repeated without interruption for 24 hours. Blazes originating on the Elemental Plane of Fire are sufficient for this task, but on the Material Plane, only molten lava is hot enough to serve. The scimitar isn't harmed by this treatment. Cost: 2,000 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Desert Wind*).

**Rite of the Clouds:** You are required to climb to the peak of a tall mountain (at least 7,000 feet) with the sword. At the peak, you must light a great fire and burn incense pleasing to the creatures of the air. Cost: 12,700 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Desert Wind*).

**Rite of the Pauper:** You must correct the mistakes Rashid ben Daoud made in the creation of the sword. This requires you to set aside one-quarter of all monies and valuables you collect for one month, vowing never to spend that sum frivolously. You must then travel to the beggar's quarter of any large city. Cost: 40,500 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Desert Wind*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Any martially inclined character who prefers a light, quick weapon benefits from *Desert Wind*, but a swordsage or other initiate of the Desert Wind discipline finds that the blade's abilities mirror his own.

**DESERT WIND WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Attack bonus +3
Weapon Focus (scimitar)

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## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Desert Wind*.

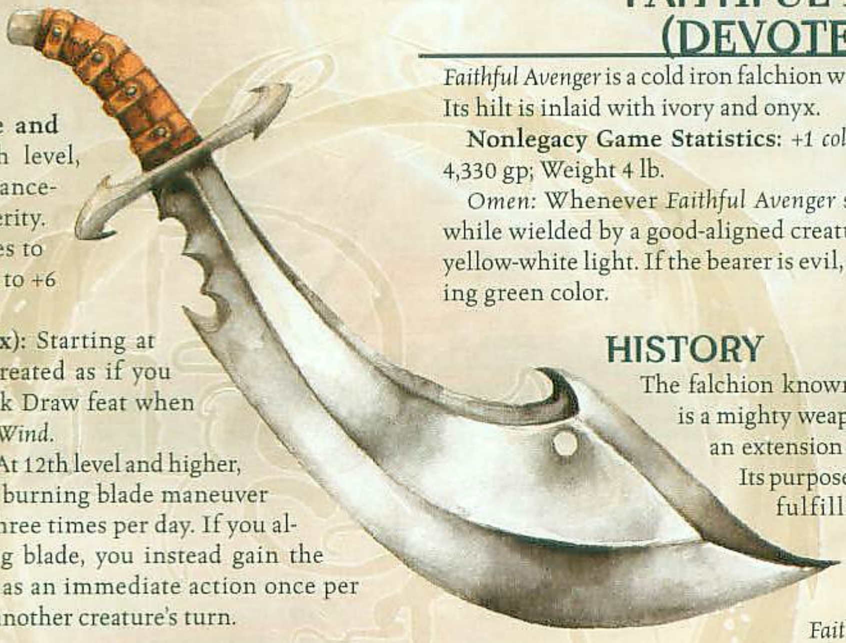
**Desert Child (Su):** At 5th level, you take to the heat of the desert days and the bitter chill of the desert nights as though born to that environment. Beginning at 5th level, you constantly benefit from the effect of an *endure elements* spell. Caster level 5th.

**Fiery Slash (Sp):** At 6th level and higher, you can cause *Desert Wind* to spray a fan of flame (like that produced by the *burning hands* spell) by slashing the blade in a broad arc. This ability is usable three times per day. The save DC is 11, or 11 + your Cha modifier, whichever is higher. Caster level 5th.

**Dance of Flame and Wind (Su):** At 7th level, you gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity. This bonus increases to +4 at 14th level and to +6 at 17th level.

**Desert Draw (Ex):** Starting at 8th level, you are treated as if you possessed the Quick Draw feat when unsheathing *Desert Wind*.

**Fiery Blade (Su):** At 12th level and higher, you can initiate the burning blade maneuver (see page 52) up to three times per day. If you already know burning blade, you instead gain the ability to initiate it as an immediate action once per encounter, even on another creature's turn.



*Faithful Avenger*

**Table 6–1: Desert Wind**

| | ———Personal Costs——— | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Desert child |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | *Fiery slash* 3/day |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | Dance of flame and wind +2 |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | Desert draw |
| 9th | — | | — | *+1 flaming scimitar* |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 11th | — | — | — | *+2 flaming scimitar* |
| 12th | — | — | — | Fiery blade |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | — |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | Dance of flame and wind +4 |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | Fan the flames |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | *+2 flaming burst scimitar* |
| 17th | — | — | — | Dance of flame and wind +6 |
| 18th | — | — | — | *+3 flaming burst scimitar* |
| 19th | — | — | — | Flames of the desert 3/day |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | *+4 flaming burst scimitar* |

**Fan the Flames (Su):** Beginning at 15th level, you can use the fan the flames maneuver (see page 53) at will, as if you knew it. If you already know fan the flames, you instead deal an extra 1 point of fire damage per die on your damage rolls with that maneuver. Caster level 10th.

**Flames of the Desert (Su):** At 19th level and higher, you can use the wyrm's flame maneuver (see page 56) three times per day, as if you knew it. If you already know burst of flame, you instead deal an extra 1 point of fire damage per die on your damage rolls with that maneuver.

## FAITHFUL AVENGER (DEVOTED SPIRIT)

*Faithful Avenger* is a cold iron falchion with a dull steel blade. Its hilt is inlaid with ivory and onyx.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 cold iron falchion;* Cost 4,330 gp; Weight 4 lb.

*Omen:* Whenever *Faithful Avenger* scores a critical hit while wielded by a good-aligned creature, it flashes with a yellow-white light. If the bearer is evil, the flash is a sickening green color.

### HISTORY

The falchion known as *Faithful Avenger* is a mighty weapon that can become an extension of its wielder's will. Its purpose has more to do with fulfilling a cause—any cause—than with representing any specific endeavor. *Faithful Avenger* has been used as often to enslave thousands as to free nations bound in slavery, because it is the devotion of its wielder that feeds the sword. **(DC 15)**

*Faithful Avenger* follows the heart and mind of its wielder. Previous wielders have included Jurrik, a noble paladin who used it to defend a hamlet from a marauding black dragon, and Lorissta, a virtuous champion who fought against the tyrannical Black Eagle Baron. When Lorissta fell, the sword was passed to one of the Black Eagle's lieutenants, who used it viciously in a number of brutal raids on nearby villages. **(DC 20; Awakening)**

Those who bore *Faithful Avenger* for long periods of time often found themselves on quests to prove their devotion to their chosen principles. Henrikel the Just annihilated an evil elemental node, and Karryn the Stout destroyed a lich's phylactery. Norbrand the Bold, on the other hand, defeated a gold dragon that threatened to expose his slave-driven mining operations. **(DC 25; Nurturing)**

The deeds of *Faithful Avenger's* greatest wielders have been written into the annals of history. Acererak was thrown down, Orcus's wand was shattered, and nations were torn asunder—all through the deeds and devotion of *Faithful Avenger's* bearers. **(DC 31; Commanding)**

## LEGACY RITUALS

The following three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Faithful Avenger.*

**Awakening:** You must spend 24 hours in contemplation, weighing the good and evil deeds in which the sword has played a part. At the end of this day, you can unlock either its good or its evil legacy. Once this choice is made, it cannot be changed until the sword is passed to a new wielder. Cost: 1,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Faithful Avenger*).

**Nurturing:** When you have slain an opponent who has a Challenge Rating equal to your character level, whose alignment opposes your own, you can meditate again to unlock *Faithful Avenger*'s lesser legacy and determine what great foe you will eventually defeat. Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Faithful Avenger*).

**Commanding:** To perform the final ritual, you must find a shrine that is sacred to an alignment that opposes yours and lock yourself within it for 24 hours. During this time, you will be challenged. If you are good-aligned, you must face a horned devil; if you are evil, you must defeat a planetar. Cost: 39,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Faithful Avenger*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

A wielder of *Faithful Avenger* must stand on one end or the other of the good/evil alignment axis. Paladins and crusaders are the most likely candidates, since they can meet the requirements easily by the time the first legacy ritual becomes available.

**FAITHFUL AVENGER WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Attack bonus +5
Weapon Proficiency (falchion)
Good or evil alignment

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Faithful Avenger.*

**Dual Legacy Properties:** *Faithful Avenger* carries two legacies, one of evil and one of good. Upon completing the first legacy ritual, you must choose which legacy to unlock. If you choose the legacy of good, the falchion will eventually grant you the ability to *detect evil,* and it will become a holy weapon. If you choose the evil legacy, you can instead *detect good,* and the weapon eventually becomes unholy.

**Faithful Strike (Ex):** Unlocking the legacy of *Faithful Avenger* grants you knowledge of the Devoted Spirit discipline. At 5th level, you gain a bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls equal to +1 per three character levels against opponents of diametrically opposed alignments. For example, if you are a lawful good 6th-level warblade wielding *Faithful Avenger* against a chaotic evil enemy, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against that foe.

Your bonuses from this ability are halved against an enemy that has only one alignment component diametrically opposed to yours, rounding down (minimum +1). In the above example, if you were fighting a neutral evil enemy, you would gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls.

**Blessing of Faith (Su):** Your affiliation with the legacy of *Faithful Avenger* makes you hardier. At 9th level, you gain a +2 enhancement bonus to your Constitution score. This bonus increases to +4 at 15th level and to +6 at 19th level.

**Detect Evil (Sp):** At 10th level and higher, you can use *detect evil,* as the spell, at will (CL 10th).

**Lesser Restoration (Sp):** At 11th level, you can use *lesser restoration,* as the spell, three times per day (CL 10th).

**Boundless Determination (Ex):** When you attain 16th level, you gain the ability to assume the immortal fortitude stance. If you already possess this class feature, your immortal fortitude stance grants you temporary hit points each round equal to your total crusader level.

**Restoration (Sp):** At 17th level, you can use *restoration* on yourself once per day as a swift action (CL 15th).

**Resiliency (Ex):** At 20th level, you gain the ability to ignore damage from a single source once per day.

**TABLE 6–2: FAITHFUL AVENGER**

| | ———Personal Costs——— | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Faithful strike |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | — |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | *+2 cold iron falchion* |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | Blessing of faith +2 |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | *Detect evil* or *detect good* |
| 11th | — | — | — | *Lesser restoration* |
| 12th | — | — | — | |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | *+2 holy or unholy cold iron falchion* |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | Blessing of faith +4 |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | Boundless determination |
| 17th | — | — | — | *Restoration* |
| 18th | — | — | — | *+3 holy or unholy cold iron falchion* |
| 19th | — | — | — | Blessing of faith +6 |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | Resiliency |

## SUPERNAL CLARITY (DIAMOND MIND)

*Supernal Clarity* is a perfectly balanced rapier made of glistening mithral. Its grip is tightly wrapped with dark blue leather.

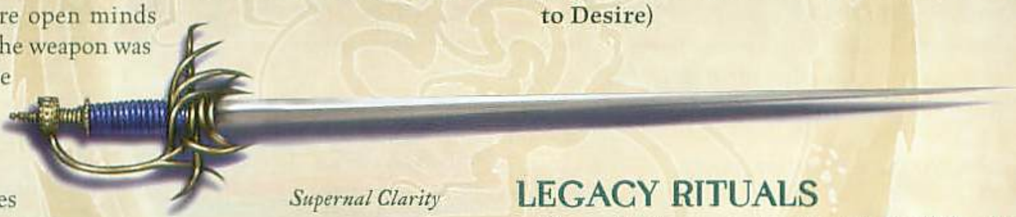
**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 rapier;* Cost 2,820 gp; Weight 1 lb.

*Omen:* Each time *Supernal Clarity* is drawn, time seems to slow for a split second. This momentary trick of perception doesn't provide any benefit or hindrance to the wielder.

## HISTORY

The blade known as *Supernal Clarity* was brought to the Temple of the Nine Swords by Reshar, the first true master of the Sublime Way. Though some martial adepts curse the sword's name, claiming that lust for this blade initiated the downfall of the temple, all know in their hearts that a weapon is merely the extension of its wielder and can never be blamed for its use—or its misuse. **(DC 15)**

Kaziir-Thet's theft of *Supernal Clarity* proved to be the beginning of the end of the golden age for the Temple of the Nine Swords. Why the rakshasa prince stole that particular sword was widely discussed, but the truth was never really known because the thief was never brought to justice. Some say that the rakshasa's crime forever tainted the sword's power, but more open minds wonder if the weapon was meant to be claimed in such a manner. After all, does action without hesitation not capture the essence of this blade? **(DC 18; Act of Audacity)**



*Supernal Clarity*

No human hand crafted *Supernal Clarity*; it was created on the Astral Plane by a githyanki swordsmith named Veselka, using a dragonfire-fueled forge. Though she had already crafted many fine magic blades, Veselka regarded this one as her most elegant creation. Despite its simplicity of appearance, the swordsmith knew that this blade—which bore no name at the time—was destined for greatness.

Only by besting its wielder, one of the most famous warblades ever known to the githyanki race, did Reshar prove his worthiness to take the blade from its home plane. Veselka never gave up hope that she might see the blade again, and while she mourned its loss every day of her life, she had always known that it could not reach its full potential unless she gave it up. **(DC 25; Forge of Dragonfire)**

Many long years after the battle that scattered the Nine Swords across the world, *Supernal Clarity* came into the possession of a humble swordsage named Radigan. Though the blade was already a weapon of great power, its wielders had always sensed that it concealed some hidden strengths. Throughout the years that he walked the lands with it, Radigan searched long and hard for the secret that would unlock this last reservoir of power, but he found no sign. Then, on a whim, Radigan made his way to the Astral Plane, hoping that some descendant of the blade's creator might still survive. To his great surprise, Veselka was still working her eternal forge, laboring endlessly to repeat her greatest achievement. Awed to stand in the presence of such a revered swordsmith, Radigan unhesitatingly offered to return *Supernal Clarity* to her. "I have proven myself incapable of learning its final secrets," he said, "so must I be unworthy to wield this great blade." Veselka smiled at the naïve adept's words, and though it tore at her heart to do so, she declined the great gift that Radigan offered. She knew that her time with the blade had ended a lifetime ago, and that she had wasted every day since in a futile pursuit. Instead, she asked to accompany Radigan to the ruins of the Temple of the Nine Swords to pay homage to Reshar, the blade's greatest wielder. The swordsage agreed, not realizing that he was accompanying Veselka on her final journey.

When the githyanki arrived at the temple and met Reshar, her life's purpose had been fulfilled. A moment later, she slumped to the floor and died quietly. Her life, which in truth had ended when Reshar took the blade away, was now rightly over, and her spirit was free. **(DC 31; An End to Desire)**

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Supernal Clarity.*

**Act of Audacity:** You must steal *Supernal Clarity* from a wielder whose Challenge Rating exceeds your character level. If you find the blade unguarded, you must first ensure that it finds worthy hands before you can unlock its powers. Cost: 1,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Supernal Clarity*).

**Forge of Dragonfire:** You must endure the fiery breath weapon of a hostile dragon whose Challenge Rating is at least equal to your character level. (Though most wielders choose a red dragon, any true dragon with a breath weapon that deals fire damage satisfies this prerequisite.) Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Supernal Clarity*).

**An End to Desire:** You must travel to the Forge of Veselka on the Astral Plane. There you must spend 24 hours in prayer and meditation. Whether or not the forge is still occupied (or operating) is up to the DM. Cost: 39,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Supernal Clarity*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

*Supernal Clarity* is best suited for a swordsage or a warblade, though any character can meet the requirements by 5th or 6th level.

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**TABLE 6–3: SUPERNAL CLARITY**

| Wielder Level | Personal Costs: Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5th | — | — | — | Intimidating strike |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | — |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | Diamond strike |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | Psychic poise |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | — |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | *+2 rapier* |
| 11th | — | — | — | Haste |
| 12th | — | — | — | *+2 keen rapier* |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | Uncanny dodge |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | *+3 keen rapier* |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | *Freedom of movement* |
| 17th | — | — | — | *+4 keen rapier* |
| 18th | — | — | — | — |
| 19th | — | — | — | *+5 keen rapier* |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | *Time stop* |

**SUPERNAL CLARITY WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Base attack bonus +3
Weapon Proficiency (rapier)
Concentration 4 ranks

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Supernal Clarity.*

**Intimidating Strike (Ex):** When you first unlock the legacy of *Supernal Clarity,* you gain a fragment of knowledge from the Diamond Mind discipline. At 5th level, you can use the sapphire nightmare blade maneuver (see page 65) five times per day, as if you knew it. If you already know sapphire nightmare strike, you gain a +2 bonus on your Concentration check made while using the maneuver.

**Diamond Strike (Su):** Beginning at 7th level, you gain a small fraction of the insight shared by all *Supernal Clarity's* previous wielders. You gain a +1 insight bonus on any attack roll made as part of a Diamond Mind strike delivered with *Supernal Clarity.*

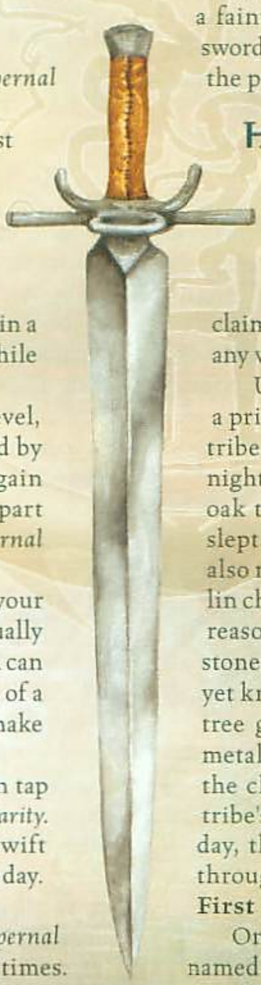
**Psychic Poise (Su):** *Supernal Clarity* hones your mental clarity to such an extent that it can actually guide your physical movements. At 8th level, you can choose to make a Concentration check in place of a Balance check three times per day. You must make this choice before attempting the check.

**Haste (Su):** Beginning at 11th level, you can tap into the inherent speed held within *Supernal Clarity.* You can use *haste* (self only) for 1 round as a swift action. This ability is usable up to five times per day. Caster level 10th.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** As a wielder of *Supernal Clarity,* you learn to be ready for battle at all times. Beginning at 13th level, you cannot be caught flat-footed, and you react to danger before your senses would normally allow you to do so. See the barbarian class feature (PH 26).

**Freedom of Movement (Sp):** Losing control of his own body is every warrior's worst nightmare, but *Supernal Clarity* grants you respite from that fear. Starting at 16th level, you can cast freedom of movement on yourself once per day as an immediate action. This ability functions as the spell, except that the duration is 1 minute. Caster level 10th.

**Time Stop (Sp):** When you unlock the final legacy power of *Supernal Clarity* at 20th level, you gain the ability to move so quickly that time seems to halt in place. Once per day on command, you can use time stop as the spell. Caster level 20th.



*Kamate*

## KAMATE (IRON HEART)

*Kamate* is a bastard sword of simple, but not crude, construction. Its hilt and pommel are unadorned with decoration or filigree of any sort, and neither rune nor image mars its perfectly smooth, razor-sharp blade.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 bastard sword;* Cost 2,335 gp; Weight 6 lb.

*Omen:* Each time the wielder draws *Kamate,* he hears a faint voice that sounds like a goblin chanting the sword's name four times, each time slightly louder than the previous.

### HISTORY

Hobgoblins claim that *Kamate* (which means "It is death" in Goblin), was the first sword ever created, forged before either the elves or the dwarves had learned the secrets of weapon-crafting. Elf and dwarf swordsmiths scoff at such claims, but the weapon's great age is readily apparent to any viewer. (**DC 15**)

Untold centuries ago, when humanoids still lived a primitive existence in the wild, a small hobgoblin tribe sought shelter from a great thunderstorm. That night, a powerful bolt of lightning sundered a mighty oak tree standing outside the cavern in which they slept. Not only did this event destroy the tree, but it also melted the very stones encircling it. The hobgoblin chieftain, whose name has been lost from memory, reasoned that if fire from the sky could reshape stone, then it could also shape metal—a concept not yet known to his people. Thus, the destruction of the tree gave birth (or so the legend says) to primitive metallurgy. Upon seeing the first blade so crafted, the chief wondered aloud what he had created. The tribe's adept answered simply, "It is death." Since that day, that first blade, *Kamate,* has been passed down through the generations of hobgoblins. (**DC 18; The First Forge**)

One of the earliest wielders of *Kamate,* a hobgoblin named Kuyibet, once fled from a horde of angry dwarf warriors bent on his destruction. Pursued day and night up steep cliffs and winding mountain pathways, the

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exhausted hobgoblin eventually found himself perched on the highest peak of the land. With no escape route available, Kuyibet bravely turned to face his doom. But at that very instant, a blue-white crack of lightning split the cloudless sky, opening a great crevasse at the feet of his pursuers. Down they hurtled into the dark depths, leaving the hobgoblin alone and unscathed. (**DC 25; Holding the Sky**)

Though the hobgoblins are loath to admit it, *Kamate* has not always remained in their hands. Tales of winning the sword back through force of arms or even treachery are well received by goblinoids, but the most important tale regarding reclamation of the blade is known only to true devotees of the Iron Heart discipline. When Reshar, who would one day be known as the first Master of Nine, came to the hobgoblin monastery of Ur-Thaldaar, none of the swordmasters believed he would survive, much less master the Iron Heart discipline. But Reshar completed every test and mastered every challenge, eventually learning the secrets of the fiercest and most difficult school of bladework in the world. Many years later, he returned to Ur-Thaldaar to take on an apprentice. A young hobgoblin named Magya Ghor followed Reshar to the Sunspire Mountains and eventually became one of the Nine Masters. When Reshar returned after a century of absence, he came bearing nine weapons. Among them was *Kamate*, which Reshar had liberated from a dragon's hoard far away. This display of respect for Magya Ghor's people created a bond of honor between the Temple of the Nine Swords and all the hobgoblin tribes in the area. So strong was this bond that when the exiled masters returned with their army to destroy the temple, more than a thousand hobgoblin warriors marched to its defense. Almost as tragic as the fall of the temple itself was the fact that when these hobgoblins died, so too did any chance of lasting peace between the goblinoids and the other races of the land. (**DC 31; Standing Ready to Die**)

**TABLE 6–4: KAMATE**

| | ———Personal Costs——— | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Steel wind |
| 6th | — | — | 4 | Shocking grasp |
| 7th | — | — | — | — |
| 8th | — | –1 | — | *+2 bastard sword* |
| 9th | –1 | — | 2 | Accurate strike |
| 10th | — | — | — | Stance agility +2 |
| 11th | — | — | — | *+3 bastard sword* |
| 12th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 13th | — | –2 | — | *Lightning bolt* |
| 14th | — | — | — | *+4 bastard sword* |
| 15th | — | — | 2 | Stance agility +4 |
| 16th | — | –3 | — | *+4 shocking burst bastard sword* |
| 17th | — | — | — | *Chain lightning* |
| 18th | — | –4 | 2 | *+5 shocking burst bastard sword* |
| 19th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 20th | — | — | 2 | Perfect strike |

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Kamate*.

**The First Forge:** You must spend the night outdoors in a thunderstorm, with no protection other than normal clothing. Cost: 2,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Kamate*).

**Holding the Sky:** You must scale a mountain peak at least 10,000 feet tall without resting for more than 4 hours in any 24-hour period. Once at the top, you must meditate for 24 hours without food or drink. Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Kamate*).

**Standing Ready to Die:** You must single-handedly defeat at least ten enemies in one battle. Each enemy's Challenge Rating can be no more than 4 points below your own. Cost: 41,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Kamate*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Warblades most often wield *Kamate*, though fighters, paladins, and other martial-oriented characters can qualify to do so without too much difficulty.

**KAMATE WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Base attack bonus +4
Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)
Balance 4 ranks

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Kamate*.

**Steel Wind (Ex):** At 5th level, you can use the steel wind maneuver (see page 69) five times per day, as if you knew it. If you already know steel wind, you gain a +1 bonus on any attack roll you make when you initiate the maneuver.

**Shocking Grasp (Su):** Beginning at 6th level, you can use *Kamate* to deliver a shocking grasp effect with a normal or touch attack once per day. If you miss, the weapon remains charged (as normal for touch spells). Activating this power is a swift action. Caster level 5th.

**Accurate Strike (Su):** At 9th level, you can cause *Kamate* to strike true against a foe three times per day. Once you activate this power (a swift action), the weapon's next attack automatically ignores any concealment the target might have. If the target is invisible, you must still attack its space. If the target is incorporeal, you ignore its 50% chance to take no damage from your hit. Furthermore, if your attack roll threatens a critical hit, you gain a +4 bonus on the attack roll to confirm.

**Stance Agility (Su):** Beginning at 10th level, you gain a +2 insight bonus on Reflex saves as long as you are in an Iron Heart stance. When you attain 15th level, this bonus improves to +4.

**Lightning Bolt (Sp):** At 13th level, you gain the ability to use lightning bolt as the spell three times per day, on command. The save DC is 14, or 13 + your Cha modifier, whichever is higher. Caster level 10th.

**Chain Lightning (Sp):** Beginning at 17th level, you can cause *Kamate* to emit a blast of lightning that arcs to other targets, as if produced by the chain lightning spell. To produce this effect, you must speak the command word and gesture with *Kamate*. The save DC is 16, or 14 + your Cha modifier, whichever is higher. This ability is usable once per day. Caster level 15th.

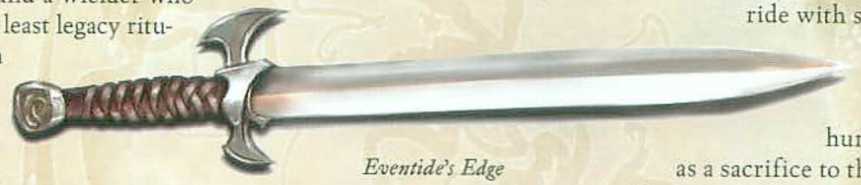
**Perfect Strike (Su):** At 20th level, while you are holding *Kamate*, you can gain a +20 competence bonus on a single attack roll. You must choose to activate this ability (an immediate action) before you make the attack roll it is to modify. This ability is usable once per day.

## EVENTIDE'S EDGE (SETTING SUN)

The mithral blade known as *Eventide's Edge* is faceted and highly reflective—so much so that it sends shards of light scattering about the room when it swings through the air.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 mithral short sword;* Cost 2,510 gp; Weight 1 lb.

*Omen:* Whenever *Eventide's Edge* is unsheathed, a bright yellow light shines within the blade. This glow quickly fades to orange, then to red, before it finally extinguishes. This process takes about 1 minute. Initially, the light is about as bright as a torch, and a wielder who has performed the least legacy ritual for the blade can suppress its glow with a thought. Unlike most other magic weapons, *Eventide's Edge* shrinks to fit the hands of a Small creature.



*Eventide's Edge*

### HISTORY

Legend holds that a ship full of Setting Sun novitiates once set sail from the Isle of Dawn in search of the Temple of the Nine Swords. But their vessel strayed off course and entered the territory of a mighty kraken, which tore the ship apart, plank by plank. All aboard were lost except one young boy, who floated for days on a half-empty cask before waking up on the sandy beach of a mysterious, uncharted island with a mithral short sword clutched in his hands. That sword became known as *Eventide's Edge*. (**DC 15**)

Throughout that day, the boy ate fruit and small game that he found near the shore and enjoyed his new island home. In the early evening, the peace of his haven was shattered when a hill giant came bursting through the wood, eager to consume this new two-legged snack. Just as the giant brought down his club, the boy raised the mithral sword in a feeble defense. To both combatants' surprise, the blade knocked the massive club aside, and the boy threw the giant off balance with only a quick sidestep. The giant came crashing down, and just before the boy stabbed the sword into his opponent's neck, the rays of the setting sun glinted briefly off the mithral blade. (**DC 20; The Bigger They Are**)

In the next few days, the boy found a higher vantage, atop a cliff overlooking the western sky. He lit a bonfire there in hopes that a passing ship might see the smoke and investigate. What the boy's signal drew, however, was not a ship, but another giant. Having found his kin dead near the beach, this one was even more enraged, and not likely to underestimate the small boy with the deadly sword. But the giant was truly baffled by the boy's fighting style. Every one of the giant's blows that should have struck true seemed to strike only empty air. When the giant finally fell off the cliff (thanks to a well-placed shove from the boy), he wondered briefly how he could have so many small cuts, and be pushed off a cliff, when that scrawny little man had nary a scratch. (**DC 25; The Harder They Fall**)

For months, the boy scratched out a spartan existence on the island. Eventually he realized that the only way he could get off the island was to convince the giants to help him get past the kraken. He knew they had an arrangement of some kind with the monster because he had seen the hulking brutes take their great fishing rafts into its territory and place some sort of offering in its mighty tentacles. So the boy approached the giant chieftain, who had long since ordered his tribe to stay clear of this small but dangerous creature. The chieftain agreed to let the boy ride with some giants past the kraken's lair, but secretly he planned to betray the puny human and offer him as a sacrifice to the kraken lord.

As the giants' raft was nearing the far edge of the kraken's domain, the boy saw a ship to the west, just below the drooping sun. When the kraken surfaced, the giants looked around for the boy, but he had jumped into the water and set off for the distant ship. They couldn't see him swimming because the light from the setting sun flashed in their eyes. The kraken took the giants as tribute instead, and the boy escaped back to civilization with his blade. (**DC 31; Capture the Sunset**)

### LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Eventide's Edge*.

**The Bigger They Are:** Within 24 hours of defeating an opponent of at least one size category larger than yours, you must spend an hour meditating in the multicolored light of the sunset. Cost: 1,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Eventide's Edge*).

**The Harder They Fall:** You must fight an opponent of at least one size category larger than yours for 4 consecutive rounds without taking damage. The opponent must attack you in melee at least once per round, and you must attack that opponent at least once per round. A short period of meditation during the next sunset completes the ritual. Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Eventide's Edge*).

**Capture the Sunset:** Starting the hour before dusk, you must close your eyes and envision in your mind the setting

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sun, while using the blade of *Eventide's Edge* to reflect the sunlight onto your face. Cost: 39,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Eventide's Edge*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Any creature that prefers light, piercing weapons but expects to face larger foes might be interested in unlocking the legacy of *Eventide's Edge*. Characters who follow the Setting Sun discipline (such as a swordsage, or even a rogue or ninja who took the Martial Study feat) stand to gain the most from its powers.

### EVENTIDE'S EDGE WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Base attack bonus +3
Knowledge of at least one maneuver from Setting Sun discipline
Weapon Proficiency (short sword)
Small or Medium size

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Eventide's Edge*.

**Crux of Balance (Ex):** When you first unlock the least legacy abilities of *Eventide's Edge* at 5th level, you have an easier time adjusting your position and balance when affected by another creature. You gain a +4 bonus on checks made to execute a bull rush, overrun, or trip, and to resist those maneuvers.

**Sting Like a Bee (Ex):** Beginning at 8th level, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage when you use *Eventide's Edge* to make a melee attack against a foe of a larger size category than yours. When you attain 17th level, this extra damage increases to 2d6, provided you have performed *Eventide's Edge*'s greater legacy ritual.

**AC Bonus (Ex):** Starting at 10th level, you add your Wisdom bonus (if any) to your AC when you are unarmored, unencumbered, and wielding *Eventide's Edge*. This bonus applies even against touch attacks or when you are flat-footed. You lose this bonus when you are immobilized or helpless, or if you wear any armor or carry a shield. If you already add your Wisdom bonus to your AC (from the monk AC bonus class feature, for instance), you instead gain a +1 bonus to AC.

**Baffling Defense (Ex):** At 11th level, you can use the comet throw maneuver (see page 71), as if you knew it. If you already know comet throw, you gain a +2 bonus on melee touch attacks made while initiating the maneuver.

**Evasive Defense (Ex):** At 14th level, you can automatically succeed on your Sense Motive check when using baffling defense against an opponent of a larger size category than yours. This ability is usable three times per day.

**Dance into the Sun (Su):** When you are in just the right position, you can become lost in the glare of the setting sun. The final legacy ability of *Eventide's Edge*, which you gain at 20th level, allows you to disappear into the glare of your sword with a dazzling flash of light. This ability functions like *greater invisibility* and is usable two times per day. Caster level 10th.

**TABLE 6–5: EVENTIDE'S EDGE**

| | Personal Costs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Crux of balance |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | — |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | *+1 defending mithral short sword* |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | Sting like a bee +1d6 |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | — |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | AC bonus |
| 11th | — | — | — | Baffling defense |
| 12th | — | — | — | — |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | *+2 defending mithral short sword* |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | Evasive defense |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | — |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | *+3 defending mithral short sword* |
| 17th | — | — | — | Sting like a bee +2d6 |
| 18th | — | — | — | *+3 defending mithral short sword* |
| 19th | — | — | — | *+4 defending mithral short sword* |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | Dance into the sun |

# UMBRAL AWN (SHADOW HAND)

*Umbral Awn* is a simple-looking dagger of the sort that a young martial adept might take to his first academy. But although it appears relatively ordinary, closer observation reveals that it never seems to reflect light of any sort.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 dagger*; Cost 2,302 gp; Weight 1 lb.

*Omen:* Using *Umbral Awn* causes a shadow to fall across the wielder's face.

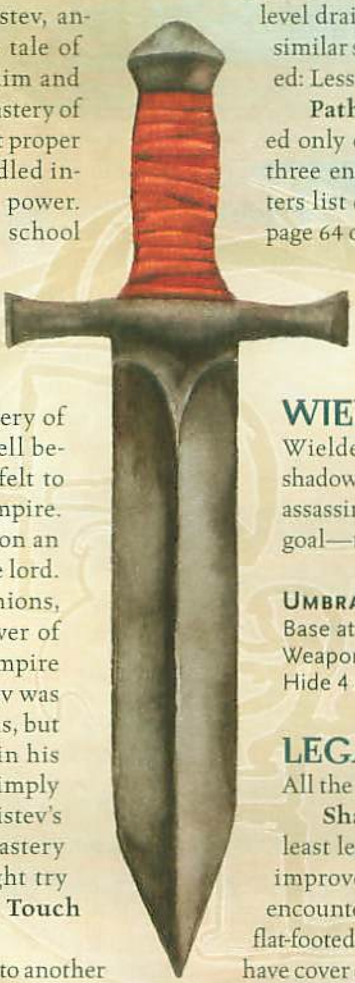
## HISTORY

*Umbral Awn* exists as an example to others who might try to master the secrets of the Shadow Hand discipline. Although the dagger can be a deadly weapon in trained hands, its legacy has forged a trail of death through its wielders. Those who perished did so because they tried to circumvent the training of the Shadow Hand discipline without understanding the true nature of its power. Reshar presented *Umbral Awn* to the Shadow Master of the Temple of the Nine Swords as a gift, but also as a reminder of what happens to those who desire undeserved power. (**DC 15**)

The first bearer of *Umbral Awn* was Yustek, a confident, arrogant disciple of the Shadow Hand. He believed that his master was delaying his training on purpose, not realizing that it was his own overconfidence that kept him from advancing. Frustrated with the stagnation in his progress, he thought long and hard about the meaning of the Shadow Hand. His unenlightened mind settled on the assumption that since its power was drawn from shadows, the best way to harness that power would be to channel Shadow itself. This line of thought led him to the incorrect conclusion that by joining with one of the undead creatures called shadows, he would gain limitless power. Instead, his encounter with the shadow went as might be expected, with the creature draining away his strength and life. Yustek did become one with the shadow—in fact, he became a shadow himself—but he never achieved the power that he had expected. (**DC 20; Touch of Shadow**)

The dagger was passed along to Maristev, another student of the Shadow Hand. The tale of Yustek's demise served as a warning to him and others who might think they could gain mastery of this most dangerous of disciplines without proper training. But Maristev had his own muddled insights into the source of the discipline's power. He had noticed that the Shadow Hand school drew upon negative energy for many of its most challenging maneuvers, and he rationalized that if he could just gain some firsthand knowledge of how negative energy worked, he could analyze it to achieve his own mastery of the discipline. Since planar travel was well beyond his means, he settled for what he felt to be the next best option—becoming a vampire. With that goal in mind, Maristev set off on an expedition to subject himself to a vampire lord. When he found the vampire and his minions, he proclaimed his desire to feel the power of negative energy. Pleased to oblige, the vampire lord ordered his spawn to attack. Maristev was soon drained dry by the vampire's minions, but since no true vampire had played a part in his death, he did not rise as a vampire—he simply stayed dead. The vampire lord sent Maristev's remains back to the Shadow Hand monastery to serve as a warning to others who might try to replicate his poor decision. (**DC 25; Touch of Death**)

With Maristev's death, the dagger passed to another student named Kunwar. This novitiate was certain that he knew the path to mastery, and that it simply required a bit of meditation within the Plane of Shadow itself. Occasionally, when long journeys were required, the Shadow Hand masters asked allied wizards to take them magically through the Plane of Shadow. So Kunwar cajoled one of the masters into allowing him to go along on such an excursion. Once within the Plane of Shadow, Kunwar sneaked away from the master and the wizard, hoping to find a quiet spot to meditate. But when he stepped off the path, he quickly became lost. The Plane of Shadow isn't the safest of places, and eventually Kunwar was trapped and killed by a nightshade. (**DC 31; Path of Shadow**)



*Umbral Awn*

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Umbral Awn*.

**Touch of Shadow:** You must suffer the touch of a shadow, then perform the ritual before the Strength damage is healed. Cost: 1,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Umbral Awn*).

**Touch of Death:** You must feel negative energy coursing through you by gaining a negative level. You must then perform the ritual before the negative level is removed. Only negative levels that have a chance of causing permanent level drain can be used for this ritual—*enervation* and similar spells do not work. Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Umbral Awn*).

**Path of Shadow:** The last ritual can be completed only on the Plane of Shadow. You must overcome three encounters (drawn from the Random Encounters list on page 152 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or page 64 of *Manual of the Planes*) within a 4-hour period, then focus the energies of the plane into the blade using a ritual that takes 1 hour. Cost: 39,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Umbral Awn*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Wielders of *Umbral Awn* see power hiding in the shadows. Most seekers of this shadow blade are rogues, assassins, or swordsages, but nearly all have the same goal—to kill without being seen.

**UMBRAL AWN WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Base attack bonus +3
Weapon Proficiency (dagger)
Hide 4 ranks

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Umbral Awn*.

**Shadowcloak (Ex):** When you first unlock the least legacy of *Umbral Awn* at 5th level, the weapon improves your stealth. In the first round of an encounter, you can use the Hide skill to hide from any flat-footed creatures as an immediate action, provided you have cover or concealment available within 10 feet of you. You cannot use this ability to hide from creatures that are not flat-footed unless you have some ability that allows you to hide in plain sight.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** At 8th level, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage with *Umbral Awn* when you are flanking an opponent or at any time when the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus. See the rogue class feature (*PH* 50). The extra damage from this ability stacks with that of sneak attack from other sources. When you attain 12th level, the sneak attack damage granted by *Umbral Awn* increases to +2d6, and when you attain 17th level, it increases again to +3d6.

**Shadowhand (Ex):** At 10th level, you are a deadly foe even when *Umbral Awn* is not in your hand. If you are unarmed and an opponent provokes an attack of opportunity, you can draw *Umbral Awn* as an immediate action and take that attack. The opponent that provoked the attack is considered flat-footed against it.

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**Shadowstrike (Ex):** When you attain 11th level, your connection to *Umbral Awn* and your mastery of the Shadow Hand discipline let you take greater advantage of flanking positions. If you are maintaining a Shadow Hand stance when you flank a target with an ally, you gain a +4 bonus on your attack rolls against that target, instead of the usual +2.

**Invisibility (Sp):** When you attain 16th level, *Umbral Awn* lets you meld into your own shadow. You can use *invisibility* at will, as the spell. Caster Level: 10th.

**Shadowstep (Su):** At 20th level, you unlock the final legacy power of *Umbral Awn*, which grants you the ability to move as a shadow. Three times per day, as a swift action, you can become incorporeal until the beginning of your next turn (see the Incorporeal Subtype sidebar on page 79 for details). Because *Umbral Awn* is a ghost touch weapon, you can still attack corporeal foes.

**TABLE 6–6: UMBRAL AWN**

| | ———Personal Costs——— | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Shadowcloak |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | — |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | *+1 ghost touch dagger* |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | Sneak attack +1d6 |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | — |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | Shadowhand |
| 11th | — | — | — | Shadowstrike |
| 12th | — | — | — | Sneak attack +2d6 |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | — |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | *+2 ghost touch dagger* |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | — |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | *Invisibility* |
| 17th | — | — | — | Sneak attack +3d6 |
| 18th | — | — | — | — |
| 19th | — | — | — | *+2 speed ghost touch dagger* |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | Shadowstep |

## UNFETTERED (STONE DRAGON)

Although clearly functional, this greatsword appears strangely unfinished. Its blade, though sharp, lacks any sheen or polish, and the leather-wrapped pommel and handguard appear crude and blocky. No gem or ornamentation of any kind adorns this weapon.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 greatsword*; Cost 2,350 gp.

*Omen:* Until battle begins, *Unfettered* feels unusually heavy to anyone holding it. Once a threat presents itself, however, the blade feels as if it were an extension of the wielder's arms.

In the hands of a goliath or other Medium character with a powerful build, *Unfettered* expands in size, becoming a Large greatsword. (Goliaths are described in *Races of Stone*.)

### HISTORY

After spending years in slavery to a band of frost giants, an elderly dwarf weaponsmith named Thungrim was given a servant to do the heavy lifting around his forge. This servant, a goliath named Kanithiak Amunugathua, took quickly to the art of swordcrafting. Together, master and servant worked in secret for many months to create a special blade, which they named *Unfettered*. (**DC 15**)

The act of creating *Unfettered* gave Thungrim a measure of hope that he hadn't known in many years. No slavemaster had commanded him to craft the weapon; indeed, if its existence had become known, grave punishment would certainly have been forthcoming. This quiet act of disobedience—along with the youthful exuberance of the goliath Kanithiak—gave Thungrim the will to survive despite backbreaking labor and mistreatment at the hands of his giant captors. (**DC 18; Unchain the Mind**)

As *Unfettered* neared completion, the frost giants began to suspect that something was amiss. The overseer had expected Thungrim to grow too weak to operate his forge, but the dwarf seemed more vigorous each day. A close investigation of the forge revealed the nearly finished blade concealed under a pile of scrap metal. Both Thungrim and Kanithiak stood nearby, too exhausted to stop the giant from finding their treasure. But just as the cruel overseer swung the weapon at the goliath, Thungrim stepped into the sword's arc, saving his friend from certain death. The dwarf fell at Kanithiak's feet, the blade still planted in his dying body. In a rage, the goliath drew the weapon and attacked the overseer. Incredibly, he managed to slay the giant, then flee the encampment with the bloody blade still clutched in his hands. (**DC 25; Unbind the Hand**)

In later years, Kanithiak became a mighty chieftain of a goliath tribe, but still he pondered what to do with the weapon he held. He considered awarding it to one of his captains, but he feared that jealousy over its ownership might cause strife within the tribe. But he knew that his days of leading the tribe were numbered, so he decided that he would prefer to leave on his own terms rather than be defeated by a youngster or (worse yet) sent away by a lamenter. So Kanithiak informed his people that he would undertake one last journey—he would spend three days in the wilderness communing with Kavaki the Ram-Lord and the other goliath gods.

So the great chieftain set out upon his solitary path. But to his surprise, the inspiration he sought came not from the gods, but from a mortal—a human warrior named Reshar, who was himself on a spiritual journey of enlightenment. The two told each other their respective tales, and Kanithiak knew instantly that he had found the rightful inheritor of *Unfettered*. In a desolate mountain cave, the goliath presented Reshar with the weapon, entrusting him with its future. With his last task in life completed, Kanithiak lay down upon the cold stone. Now he would see his friend Thungrim again. Now his soul, irrevocably scarred by his early captivity, would truly be free. (**DC 31; Unshackle the Soul**)

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Unfettered*.

**Unchain the Mind:** You must single-handedly craft a weapon worth at least 10 gp without pausing for sleep or meals, though drinking water is allowed. Cost: 2,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Unfettered*).

**Unbind the Hand:** You must slay a giant whose Challenge Rating equals or exceeds your character level. Cost: 12,500 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Unfettered*).

**Unshackle the Soul:** You must visit the final resting place of Kanithiak the goliath, a cave that lies high on a distant and treacherous mountain peak. Once there, you must meditate uninterrupted for 24 hours. Cost: 45,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Unfettered*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Martial adepts of all kinds can learn to wield *Unfettered* with little effort. Barbarians and fighters also find the weapon to their liking, though cross-class skill purchasing is required.

### UNFETTERED WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Base attack bonus +3
Weapon Proficiency (greatsword)
Balance 4 ranks

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Unfettered*.

**Charging Minotaur (Ex):** At 5th level, you can use the charging minotaur maneuver (see page 81) five times per day, as if you knew it. If you already know charging minotaur, you gain a +2 bonus on the Strength check made to bull rush your opponent when using that maneuver.

**Strength Enhancement (Su):** Beginning at 9th level, you gain a +2 enhancement bonus to your Strength score as long as you hold *Unfettered*. This bonus improves to +4 at 13th level, and to +6 at 17th level.

**Enlarge (Sp):** When you attain 10th level, you can increase your size as if you had cast *enlarge person* on yourself. This effect works regardless of your creature type and is usable once per day on command. Caster level 5th.

**Meld into Stone (Sp):** Beginning at 12th level, you can meld your body and possessions into a single block of stone, as if you had cast the *meld into stone* spell on yourself. During the first round after you step out of the stone, you gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls made as part of any Stone Dragon strike. This ability is usable once per day. Caster level 10th.

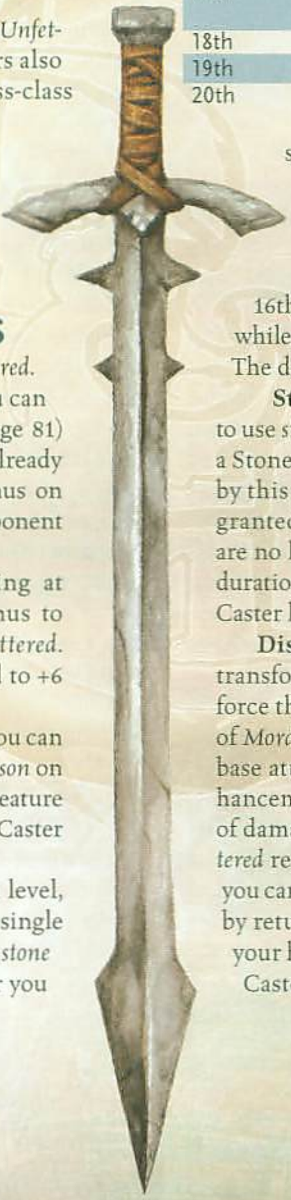
### TABLE 6–7: UNFETTERED

| | Personal Costs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Ref Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Charging minotaur |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | — |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | *+2 greatsword* |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | Strength enhancement +2 |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | *Enlarge* |
| 11th | — | — | — | *+3 greatsword* |
| 12th | — | — | — | *Meld into stone* |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | Strength enhancement +4 |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | *+4 greatsword* |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | Light fortification |
| 17th | — | — | — | Strength enhancement +6 |
| 18th | — | — | — | *+5 greatsword* |
| 19th | — | — | — | *Stoneskin* |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | Disembodied blade |

**Light Fortification (Su):** When you attain 16th level, any critical hit or sneak attack scored on you while you hold *Unfettered* has a 25% chance to be negated. The damage is instead rolled normally in this case.

**Stoneskin (Sp):** At 19th level, you gain the ability to use *stoneskin* on yourself once per day while you are in a Stone Dragon stance. The damage reduction granted by this effect replaces any damage reduction normally granted by the stance. The effect ends as soon as you are no longer in a Stone Dragon stance, or whenever its duration would normally expire, whichever comes first. Caster level 13th.

**Disembodied Blade (Su):** At 20th level, you can transform *Unfettered* into a shimmering blade of pure force that hovers in the air. This effect is the equivalent of *Mordenkainen's sword*, except that the blade uses your base attack bonus + your Strength bonus + its own enhancement bonus on attack rolls. It deals 4d6+5 points of damage plus 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus. *Unfettered* remains in this form for up to 17 rounds, though you can dismiss the effect earlier as a swift action, thereby returning the blade to your hands, or to your feet if your hands are full. This ability is usable once per day. Caster level 17th.



*Unfettered*

*Illus. by B. Trott*

## TIGER FANG (TIGER CLAW)

*Tiger Fang*'s steel blade is etched with a stylized tiger whose claws and fangs mark its keen edge. The hilt of this razor-sharp kukri is wrapped in alternating colors of leather—black and brown —to emulate a tiger's stripes.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** *+1 kukri*; Cost 2,308 gp; Weight 2 lb.

*Omen:* When Tiger's Fang is swung through the air, a faint roar accompanies its passing instead of the usual whistling sound a weapon makes.

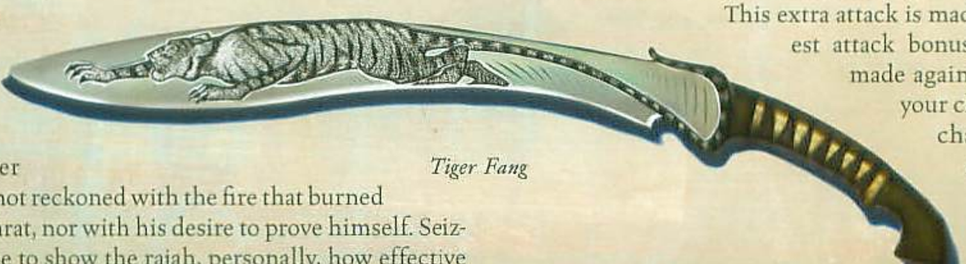
### HISTORY

On his deathbed, an aging warrior passed *Tiger Fang* along to his only son, Khasparat, who vowed to use it to prove himself a mighty warrior in honor of his father. But the rajah who ruled the village could not bear to send a widow's only son into battle, so he refused to allow Khasparat into the army. Nevertheless, Khasparat knew that someday he would find a way to prove himself. (**DC 15**)

Khasparat's first chance to display his prowess came when a tribe of lizardfolk raided his village. While the army engaged the brunt of the lizardfolk strike force, Khasparat noted another squad of the scaly humanoids moving toward an undefended part of the town. Heedless of his own safety, he rushed into the heart of the reptile band, slashing about with his father's kukri until the entire squad had retreated. But instead of the gratitude and respect he had expected for his selfless deed, Khasparat received an admonishment from the rajah for endangering himself in the fight. (**DC 20; Greater Numbers**)

Khasparat still could not honor his father with his battle prowess because he was still not allowed to join the army. Then one day, a great tiger attacked the village while the army was away. With *Tiger Fang* in his hand and his father in his heart, Khasparat charged forward, hacking at the great beast until it finally fell dead. The rajah was impressed, but still disappointed that Khasparat would risk his own life in this way. (**DC 25; One on One**)

Khasparat had nearly given up on proving himself because he could see no way to honor his father with valorous deeds. So he went one last time to request permission from the rajah to join the army. Just as he posed his question, an old sorcerous enemy of the rajah who had entered the village by stealth appeared by the leader's side. The rajah's guards were put to sleep in an instant, and the sorcerer summoned four demons to finish off the rajah and any others unlucky enough to be nearby. But the malicious wielder of magic had not reckoned with the fire that burned inside Khasparat, nor with his desire to prove himself. Seizing the chance to show the rajah, personally, how effective he could be, Khasparat jumped into the midst of the demons, slicing brutally with his father's kukri until all four were destroyed. Unfortunately, before the sorcerer was overcome by the rajah's reinforcements, he managed to deliver a mortal blow to Khasparat. As the young man lay dying, the rajah assured him that he could not have done his father any greater honor. (**DC 31; Battle Frenzy**)



*Tiger Fang*

### LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Tiger Fang*.

**Greater Numbers:** You must act first in a combat against greater numbers and immediately charge the strongest opponent. You must accept no healing during the fight, though your allies can assist you. After the battle, you must focus and meditate for 1 hour. Cost: 1,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Tiger Fang*).

**One on One:** You must defeat an opponent with a Challenge Rating equal to or greater than your character level –1 in single combat, using only the abilities of *Tiger Fang*, Tiger Claw maneuvers, or melee attacks. You can use an off-hand weapon so long as *Tiger Fang* remains your primary weapon. After the battle you must spend one night in meditation. Cost: 13,000 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Tiger Fang*).

**Battle Frenzy:** In a single encounter, you must successfully land a critical hit on four different opponents, each of which must have a Challenge Rating equal to or greater than your character level –3. After the battle, you must spend a day in meditation with *Tiger Fang*. Cost: 39,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Tiger Fang*).

### WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Wielders of *Tiger Fang* generally prefer melee combat, and the weapon has an affinity for barbarians and shifters. A martial adept focused on the Tiger Claw school would do well to use *Tiger Fang* as one of his two weapons.

**TIGER FANG WIELDER REQUIREMENTS**

Base attack bonus +3
Weapon Proficiency (kukri)
Jump 5 ranks

### LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All the following are legacy abilities of *Tiger Fang*

**Frenzied Charge (Ex):** Strike fast, strike hard, and tear your enemies to pieces. The first legacy ability of *Tiger Fang*, which you gain at 5th level, grants you the power to take one additional attack with *Tiger Fang* at the end of a charge. This extra attack is made at your highest attack bonus and must be made against the target of your charge. Frenzied charge is usable once per day.

**Claw of the Tiger (Su):** When

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you attain 6th level, *Tiger Fang* becomes an extension of your own hand when you wield it. So long as you are conscious, you cannot be disarmed of *Tiger Fang* unless you will it. You automatically succeed on checks made to resist disarm attempts, and you do not drop *Tiger Fang* if you become panicked or stunned.

**Tiger Leap (Ex):** At 7th level, you find more spring in your step, gaining a +5 bonus on Jump checks whenever you wield *Tiger Fang.*

**Battle Fever (Su):** At 10th level, you are invigorated whenever you use *Tiger Fang* in melee. Three times per day, you can use a swift action to heal yourself of 1d8 points of damage, so long as you have used *Tiger Fang* to make an attack against a living foe during that same round. Using this ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. At 16th level, you can use battle fever five times per day, and it heals 2d8 damage each time.

**Sharp Claw (Ex):** Once you have performed the lesser legacy ritual at 11th level, you find that *Tiger Fang* is perfectly balanced for use with Tiger Claw maneuvers. As long as you have a Tiger Claw stance active, you deal an extra 1 point of damage with all your melee attacks, including strikes, made with *Tiger Fang.*

**Haste (Sp):** When you attain 12th level, *Tiger Fang* speeds up your perception of time, granting you a flurry of motion. While you are holding, wearing, or wielding the blade, you can use *haste* for 1 round as a swift action, as though you were wearing *boots of speed.* This ability is usable up to five times per day.

**Vicious Attack (Ex):** The kukri's keen edge finds the softest places to cut, and *Tiger Fang* can cut even deeper. When you attain 14th level, the critical multiplier of *Tiger Fang* increases to ×3.

**Power Critical (Ex):** When you unlock *Tiger Fang*'s greater legacy at 17th level, you gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls made to confirm critical hits with *Tiger Fang.*

**Devastating Attack (Ex):** *Tiger Fang* ultimately becomes a devastating weapon, capable of dropping a foe with a single, well-placed slice. When you attain 20th level, the critical multiplier of *Tiger Fang* increases to ×4.

**TABLE 6–8: TIGER FANG**

| | Personal Costs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Fort Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Frenzied charge |
| 6th | –1 | — | — | Claw of the tiger |
| 7th | — | –1 | 2 | Tiger leap |
| 8th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 9th | — | –2 | — | *+1 keen kukri* |
| 10th | — | — | 2 | Battle fever 1d8 |
| 11th | — | — | — | Sharp claw |
| 12th | — | — | — | *Haste* |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | — |
| 14th | — | — | 2 | Vicious attack |
| 15th | — | –3 | — | — |
| 16th | — | — | 2 | Battle fever 2d8 |
| 17th | — | — | — | Power critical |
| 18th | — | — | — | — |
| 19th | — | — | — | — |
| 20th | — | –4 | 2 | Devastating attack |

# BLADE OF THE LAST CITADEL (WHITE RAVEN)

The *Blade of the Last Citadel* (sometimes called simply Citadel's Blade) is an adamantine longsword. The pommel is bound in white leather, and the crossguard resembles a crenellated wall, with the white enameled crenellations facing the blade.

**Nonlegacy Game Statistics:** Adamantine longsword; Cost 3,315 gp.

*Omen:* If used to injure an innocent sentient being, Citadel's Blade weeps blood until the wielder receives an atonement or gives up the blade to another.

## HISTORY

No legend relates the creation of the *Blade of the Last Citadel.* The first story of the weapon describes how the great knight Iulian wielded it against a small army of giants attacking a desolate mountain outpost. Knowing that their humble tower was the last line of defense between the giants and the populated valley below, the protectors of the outpost fought to the last man. Eventually, however, the stronghold fell to the marauders. (**DC 15**)

After Iulian fell leading a charge against the giants, his squire Terras took up the *Blade of the Last Citadel* to defend his fallen lord. Defeated, sorely wounded, and left for dead, the squire awakened long after the battle and raced down the mountainside in pursuit of the giants. But he was too late to save the defenseless townsfolk below. Devastated by his failure, the squire rode for days until he found a village that hadn't been sacked. There he attempted to drown his sorrow in ale, but tragedy still followed him. When a local tough attempted to bully the squire into giving up his fine blade, Terras drew the sword and, in a drunken rage, slew his tormentor. Horrified, Terras fled the inn, but he could never escape his guilt. (**DC 18; Rite of Repentance**)

Years later, a lone paladin rode out of the frontier, his mount ragged and gasping. When he reached the entrance of a small, walled village, he pounded on the gate with the pommel of his bloody blade. Upon gaining entrance, he warned all who would listen about a horde of bloodthirsty orcs approaching from the distant hills, destroying all in its path. The townsfolk scoffed at this news—no orcs had been spotted in this territory in years—and went back about their business. Hanging his head, the paladin asked only for a fresh horse, then left the way he had come. The next morning, his body was found a few miles away, surrounded by dozens of orc corpses. His shield had been sundered and his armor rent, but his hands still clutched Citadel's Blade. No one ever learned his name. (**DC 25; Rite of Selfless Defense**)

The nameless paladin received a hero's funeral, and the townsfolk placed the *Blade of the Last Citadel* upon his grave. No one dared touch the sword for fear that some strange curse might befall them for desecrating the paladin's gravesite. But one evening, just as the full moon was rising above the horizon, an enigmatic white-haired warrior visited the town in search of the weapon. The man explained that the weapon's destiny was to stand in defense of those who, like the villagers, could not protect themselves. Such calmness and clarity did the man display that the townsfolk couldn't help but lead him to their hero's last resting place. There, the warrior bowed his head in quiet meditation and remained motionless for three full nights. When dawn broke on the fourth day, both he and the blade were gone. (**DC 31; Rite of Respect**)

## LEGACY RITUALS

Three rituals are required to unlock all the abilities of *Blade of the Last Citadel.*

**Rite of Repentance:** You must seek forgiveness from someone you have wronged. The details of the situation are between the player and the DM, but attaining forgiveness might require some work on your part. Cost: 2,500 gp. Feat Granted: Least Legacy (*Blade of the Last Citadel*).

**Rite of Selfless Defense:** You must perform some service in defense of a community and accept no reward for your actions. Examples include defeating a local threat (EL equal to or exceeding your character level +1), recovering a treasured heirloom, or averting a significant crisis. Cost: 12,500 gp. Feat Granted: Lesser Legacy (*Blade of the Last Citadel*).

**Rite of Respect:** You must meditate for 8 hours per night on the three nights of a full moon. Cost: 44,000 gp. Feat Granted: Greater Legacy (*Blade of the Last Citadel*).

## WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Crusaders, paladins, and knights (see *Player's Handbook II*) are the most likely wielders of Citadel's Blade. Clerics and favored souls (*Complete Divine*) of Heironeous (or similar deities) might also find the blade to their liking. It has also been wielded by bards, fighters, marshals (see *Miniatures Handbook*), and many others who put the defense of others above their own lives.

### BLADE OF THE LAST CITADEL WIELDER REQUIREMENTS

Any nonevil alignment
Base attack bonus +3
Weapon Proficiency (longsword)
Diplomacy 4 ranks

## LEGACY WEAPON ABILITIES

All of the following are legacy abilities of *Blade of the Last Citadel.*

**Leading the Attack (Ex):** When you first unlock the legacy abilities of *Blade of the Last Citadel* at 5th level, you can use the leading the attack maneuver (see page 91) five times per day, as if you knew it. If you already know leading the attack, you gain a +1 bonus on the first attack roll you make during the round in which you initiate the maneuver. Caster level 5th.

**Prayer (Sp):** Beginning at 10th level, you can use *prayer* once per day. Caster level 7th.

**Remove Fear (Sp):** At 12th level, you gain the ability to use *remove fear* as an immediate action, though it affects only a single creature up to 50 feet away, and you can't use it on yourself. This ability is usable three times per day. Caster level 10th.

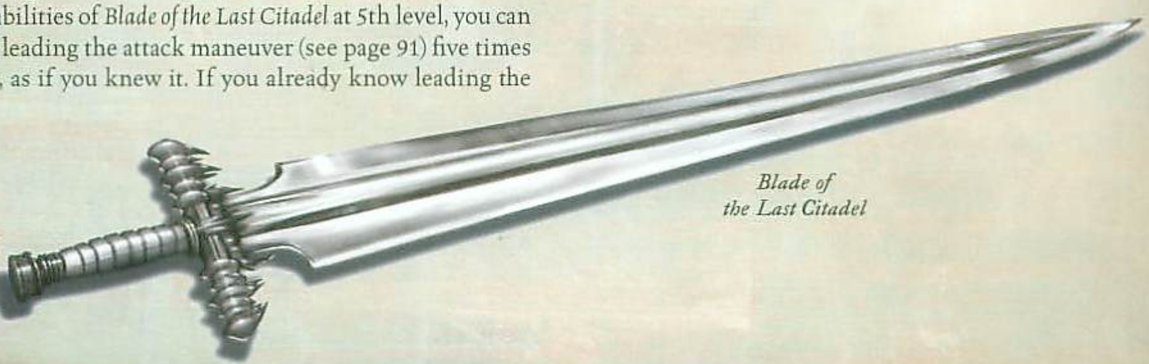
**Cure Critical Wounds (Sp):** At 16th level, you can use *cure critical wounds* on yourself once per day as a swift action. Caster level 11th.

**Blade Barrier (Sp):** Beginning at 18th level, you can transform *Blade of the Last Citadel* into a ring-shaped *blade barrier* centered on you. While the sword is in *blade barrier* form, you can add its enhancement bonus to your AC as if using the defending property of the weapon. At any time during the duration, you can dismiss the effect as a swift action, which returns *Blade of the Last Citadel* to your hand (or to a spot at your feet if your hands are full). This ability is usable three times per day. Caster level 15th.

**Heal (Sp):** At 20th level, you can use *heal* on yourself once per day as a swift action. Caster level 17th.

**TABLE 6–9: BLADE OF THE LAST CITADEL**

| | ——— | Personal Costs | ——— | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wielder Level | Attack Penalty | Save Penalty | Hit Point Loss | Legacy Abilities |
| 5th | — | — | — | Leading the attack |
| 6th | — | — | 4 | *+1 longsword* |
| 7th | — | — | — | — |
| 8th | — | –1 | — | *+2 longsword* |
| 9th | –1 | — | 2 | — |
| 10th | — | — | — | *Prayer* |
| 11th | — | — | — | *+3 longsword* |
| 12th | — | — | 2 | *Remove fear* |
| 13th | –2 | — | — | — |
| 14th | — | — | — | *+4 longsword* |
| 15th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 16th | — | –2 | — | *Cure critical wounds* |
| 17th | — | — | — | *+5 defending longsword* |
| 18th | –3 | — | — | *Blade barrier* |
| 19th | — | — | 2 | — |
| 20th | — | — | 2 | *Heal* |



*Blade of the Last Citadel*

*Illus. by J. Nentrup*

# MAGIC ITEMS

*The exiles return with a monstrous horde to destroy the Temple of the Nine Swords*

The use of the Nine Swords disciplines has led to the creation of many different magic items, from martial scripts to wondrous items. This chapter describes just a few of these items.

## MARTIAL SCRIPTS

A martial script is a small strip of paper or cloth marked with delicate lettering that holds the secret of a martial maneuver. Any given script grants the use of the maneuver recorded on it for one encounter. Once it is activated, a script vanishes in a puff of white smoke.

**Physical Description:** A typical script is a long, thin slip of paper or cloth about 6 to 12 inches long and 1 to 2 inches wide, typically wound around a small wooden spindle or rod. Small, precise lettering covers most of one surface. A script has AC 13, 1 hit point, and a break DC of 8.

**Identifying Scripts:** Martial scripts are magic items. They radiate magic of the Divination school (faint for initiator level 5th or less, moderate for initiator level 6th to 11th, strong for initiator level 12th to 20th, and overpowering for initiator level 21st or higher).

Anyone who can read the language of the script can determine what it does, and it can also be identified by any of the standard methods of magic item identification. Furthermore, characters with ranks in Martial Lore can identify the function of a script without knowing the language in which it is written (Martial Lore DC 15 + the martial adept level associated with the script). Making this check does not grant that character the ability to use the script—only to identify it.

**Activation:** To activate a script, you must read its words aloud. Typically, this requirement means you must be able to read the alphabet used for the script, but you don't necessarily have to understand the language. For example, if you know Dwarven, you can use a script written in Giant because that language uses the Dwarven alphabet. An illiterate character cannot activate a script.

If you don't know the alphabet in which the script is written, you can use Martial Lore to activate it. To do so,

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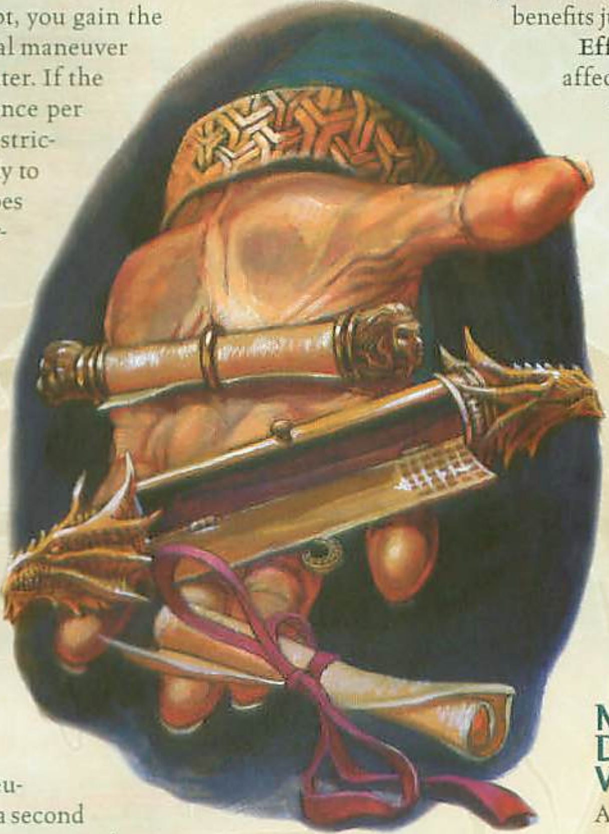
you must succeed on a Martial Lore check (DC 20 + the martial adept level associated with the script). Success gives you the option of using the script immediately or readying for later use.

Reading a script is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

**Use:** When you read a script, you gain the ability to use the single martial maneuver recorded on it for one encounter. If the maneuver can be used only once per encounter or has other use restrictions, all those limitations apply to your use of it. Using a script does not allow you to break the normal usage rules for maneuvers. For example, if you would normally be limited to using one stance at a time, that restriction still applies.

You need not use the maneuver right away; you can hold it ready for use for up to 1 hour. At any point during that hour, you can use the maneuver simply by initiating it. If you've read several scripts and initiated their use, you have access to all the maneuvers they grant for their durations, but you can hold only one script-granted maneuver ready at a time. If you read a second script before using the maneuver granted by the first, you lose the first maneuver and now have the second script's maneuver readied.



*Scripts can take many forms, from humble to ostentatious, but all are small strips of scroll or cloth*

**Creating Martial Scripts**: To create a martial script, you must know the Scribe Martial Script feat and the maneuver you are recording. The market price of a martial script is equal to the initiator level × maneuver level × 50 gp. You must spend 1/25 of this market price in XP and use materials costing 1/2 the market price. Scribing a martial script takes one day for each 1,000 gp of its market price.

## NEW WEAPON SPECIAL ABILITIES

A weapon with a special ability must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus.

### APTITUDE WEAPON

The aptitude property lets a wielder apply his expertise with another type of weapon to the aptitude weapon. Thus, the master of a greatsword is the also the master of any aptitude weapon.

**Description:** Aptitude weapons have no special appearance.

**Prerequisite:** Anyone can wield an aptitude weapon, but to gain any benefit from it, a wielder must have feats that are tied to the use of a particular weapon type.

**Activation:** An aptitude weapon's magic is worthless in the hands of someone who lacks the appropriate feats, but anyone with the right feats gains the weapon's benefits just by wielding it.

**Effect:** A wielder who has feats that affect the use of a particular type of weapon, such as Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, or the like, can apply the benefits of those feats to any weapon that has the aptitude quality. In addition, if any of the wielder's weapon use feats are specifically keyed to the aptitude weapon's type, he gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls.

**Aura/Caster Level:** Faint evocation.

**Construction:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Weapon Focus (weapon being enchanted).

**Weight:** As normal for the weapon.

**Price:** +1 bonus.

### MARTIAL DISCIPLINE WEAPON

A martial discipline enhancement seems worthless in the hands of a wielder not initiated in the use of the discipline's maneuvers, and even to someone with appropriate training, it might appear to be a weak substitute for more traditional enhancements. Yet when used in conjunction with a maneuver from the right discipline, the weapon seems to come alive in the wielder's hands, seeking its target's blood like a living predator.

**Description:** Martial discipline weapons need not possess any special appearance, but most magic item crafters decorate them with emblems and add special effects relating to their associated disciplines. For example, a *+1 Shadow Hand siangham* might have black hand emblems that appear on the blade when its wielder swings it. Or a *+2 Iron Heart shocking bastard sword* might crackle with electricity with even the smallest shift in position and spit a trail of sparks with every swing.

**Prerequisite:** Anyone can wield a martial discipline weapon, but its greatest benefits are reserved for a wielder who knows and uses maneuvers from the discipline to which the weapon is keyed.

**Activation:** A wielder who knows a maneuver from the appropriate discipline gains a small bonus on attack rolls, but to gain the true benefits of a martial discipline weapon, the wielder must use a maneuver from the correct discipline while attacking.

**Effect:** Each martial discipline weapon is keyed to a particular martial discipline. For someone who doesn't know any maneuvers from that discipline, this property provides no benefit. But when the weapon is wielded by a martial adept who knows at least one maneuver from the associated discipline, the property provides a +1 bonus on attack rolls. And when the wielder is actually using a maneuver from the appropriate discipline, the bonus on attack rolls increases to +3.

A martial discipline weapon can bear multiple martial discipline special abilities, as long as each is keyed to a different discipline. Thus, a martial adept could have a *+1 Stone Dragon Shadow Hand greatsword.* In the hands of someone who knows maneuvers from both disciplines, such a weapon would provide a +3 bonus on attack rolls. If the wielder were actually using maneuvers from both schools—for example, a Stone Dragon stance with a Shadow Hand strike—it would provide a +7 bonus on attack rolls. Most martial adepts use this extra bonus in conjunction with feats such as Combat Expertise and Power Attack, or with maneuvers that decrease their chances of hitting a foe in exchange for some other benefit.

**Aura/Caster Level:** Faint evocation.

**Construction:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, knowledge of a maneuver from the discipline to which the weapon is keyed.

**Weight:** As normal for the weapon.

**Price:** +1 bonus.

## NEW WONDROUS ITEMS

The wondrous items presented here can be used both by martial adepts and by those who have no knowledge of the martial disciplines.

### CROWN OF WHITE RAVENS

A *crown of White Ravens* is one of several items that grants its wearer the use of a maneuver. The crown's wearer need not be a martial adept, but knowledge of other maneuvers and ranks in the discipline's key skill give the wearer access to more powerful maneuvers.

**Lore:** Elf scholars insist that members of their race were the first to create *crowns of White Ravens,* and all other similar items, such as *Desert Wind cloaks* and *slippers of the Setting Sun,* are copies of the concept created by martial adepts of other races. This assessment seems plausible not only because all *crowns of White Ravens* seem to be fashioned in the elven style, but also because the crowns have the longest recorded history.

**Description:** Three types of *crowns of White Ravens exist:* novice, scholar, and master. Each looks like a crown of white alabaster, carved with delicate fluting and spindles that rise from it like castle towers. *Novice crowns of White Ravens* have the simplest appearance and the fewest spires, while a *master crown of White Ravens* bears more than a dozen towers and some highly ornate carvings.

**Prerequisite:** Anyone can wear a *crown of White Ravens,* but to gain any benefit from it, a wearer must meet the prerequisite of the desired maneuver.

**Activation:** A *crown of White Ravens* requires a day to attune to its wearer once it is donned. After wearing it continually for 24 hours, the wearer must choose one of the White Raven maneuvers that the item can grant for which he meets the prerequisite. He then gains knowledge of that maneuver and can use it as long as the crown is worn. Should the crown be removed and then replaced, it requires another day to attune itself to the wearer before it can grant knowledge of any maneuvers.

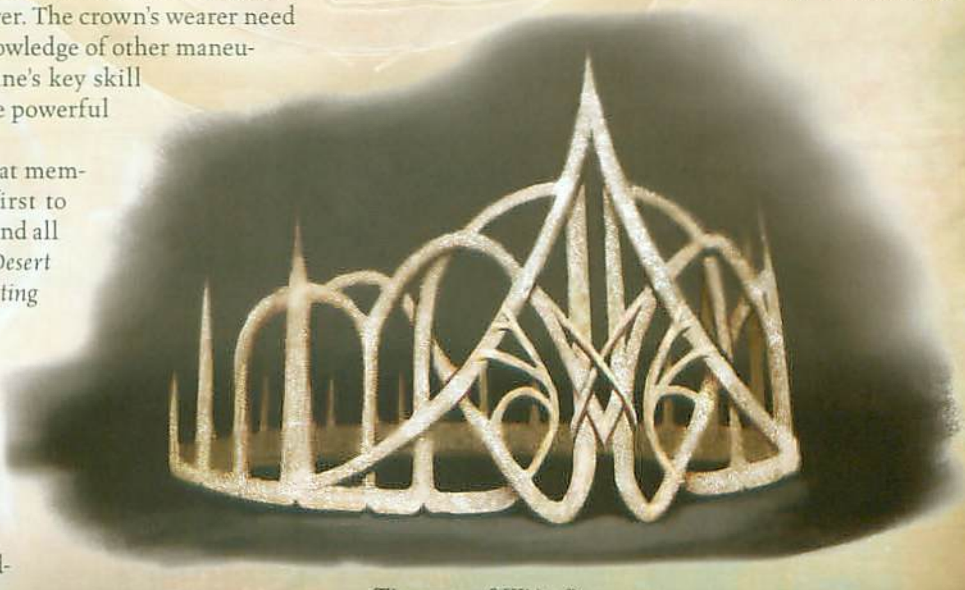
**Effect:** A person who has worn a *crown of White Ravens* for 24 hours gains the use of a single White Raven maneuver for which he meets the prerequisite. The maneuver can be of a martial adept level up to the highest level the *item* grants. A *novice crown of White Ravens* grants a maneuver of up to 3rd level, a *scholar crown of White Ravens* grants a maneuver of up to 6th level, and a *master crown of White Ravens* grants a maneuver of up to 9th level.

**Aura/Caster Level:** Faint divination (novice), moderate divination (scholar), or strong divination (master). CL 5th (novice), 10th (scholar), or 15th (master).

**Construction (Novice):** Craft Wondrous Item, knowledge of a maneuver from the White Raven discipline; 1,500 gp, 120 XP, 3 days.

**Construction (Scholar):** Craft Wondrous Item, knowledge of a maneuver from the White Raven discipline; 7,500 gp, 600 XP, 15 days.

**Construction (Master):** Craft Wondrous Item, knowledge of a maneuver



*The crown of White Ravens*

*Illus. by J. Nentrup*

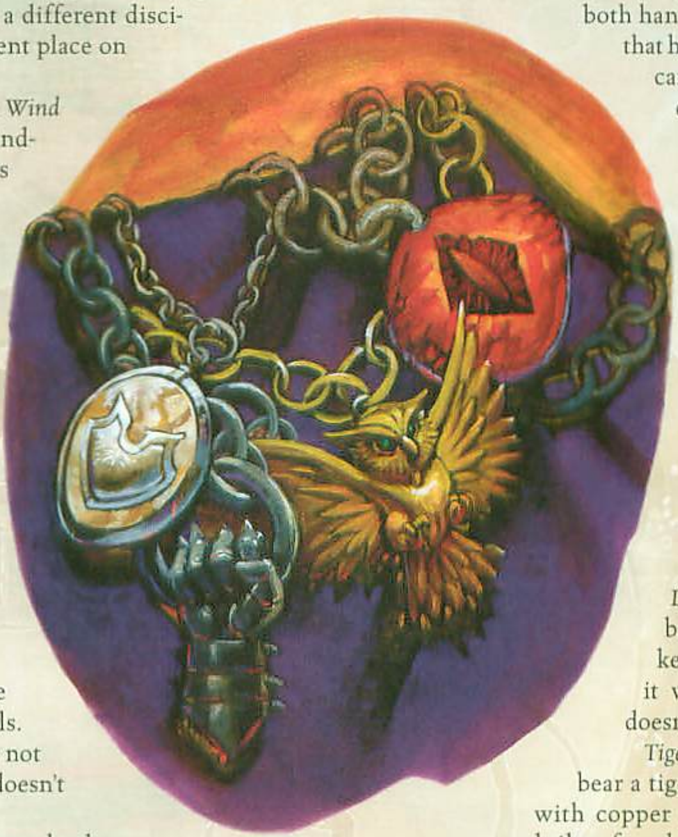
Illus. by S. Ellis

from the White Raven discipline; 22,500 gp, 1,800 XP, 45 days.

**Variants:** Eight variants of the *crown of White Ravens* exist, one for each of the other martial disciplines. Like the *crown of White Ravens*, each has a novice, scholar, and master version. In all respects, they function in the same manner as the *crown of White Ravens* does, except that each grants access to a maneuver from a different discipline and occupies a different place on the wearer's body.

*Desert Wind Cloak: Desert Wind cloaks* are the color of windblown sand, and they always shift and flutter as if disturbed by a breeze, even indoors and on calm days. Most bear decorative stitching around the edges in gold and red thread depicting flaming scimitars, picks that trail smoke, and maces that shine like the sun.

*Devoted Spirit Amulet:* The appearance of these amulets varies considerably, since each is constructed to serve a particular axis of alignment: chaos, evil, good, or law. Some even double as holy symbols. A *Devoted Spirit amulet* does not function for someone who doesn't share its alignment.



*Devoted Spirit amulets take many forms*

*Iron Heart Vest:* These heavy, leather vests are run through with tiny slivers of iron, which give them a dull sparkle. The iron resists rust, but *Iron Heart vests* can eventually take on an orange hue because the iron slivers degrade and stain the vest's material.

*Ring of the Diamond Mind:* Unlike similar items devoted to different disciplines, a *ring of the Diamond Mind* requires its creator to have the Forge Ring feat instead of Craft Wondrous Item. A ring of the Diamond Mind looks like a simple gold band set with a diamond, but anyone peering closely into the stone can see the visage of the wearer, or of the last person to wear the ring if no one currently wears it.

*Shadow Hands:* Shadow Hands look like hands carved of jet. The carvings are incredibly detailed, depicting every mark of a humanoid hand, down to fingerprints and every crack in the palm and knuckle. When someone places both hands over the *Shadow Hands* so that his shadow falls over them, the carved hands vanish, and a pair of black silk gloves appears on the person's hands. These gloves can be removed normally, whereupon they become hands carved of jet that look exactly like the wearer's hands.

*Slippers of the Setting Sun:* Each of these beautifully crafted red silk slippers bears an emblem of the setting sun upon the toe. The sun is stitched in gold thread, and its rays are bronze and copper.

*Stone Dragon Belt:* A *Stone Dragon belt* looks like a wide belt made from expertly broken slabs of slate. Surprisingly, it weighs almost nothing and doesn't inhibit movement at all.

*Tiger Claw Bracers:* These bracers bear a tiger's stripes, but all in metal, with copper for orange, iron for black, and silver for white. Upon donning the bracers, the wearer hears a tiger's roar and feels the pain of sharp claws in his back for fleeting moment.

Weight: 1 lb (*Desert Wind cloak, crown of White Ravens, Iron Heart vest, Stone Dragon belt, Tiger Claw bracers*); 1/2 lb. (*slippers of the Setting Sun*), or — (*Devoted Spirit amulet, ring of the Diamond Mind, Shadow Hands*).

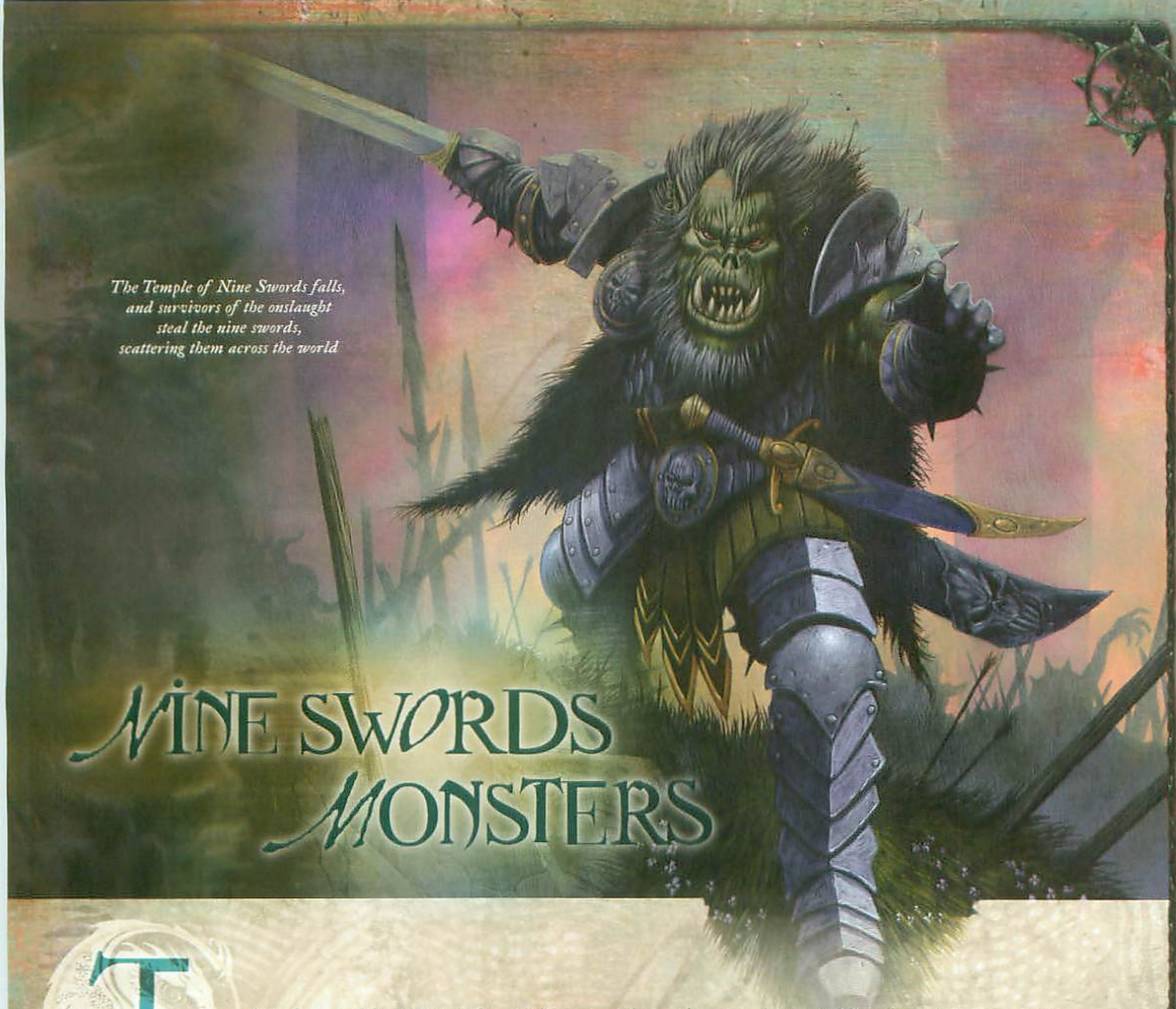
Price: 3,000 gp (novice), 15,000 gp (scholar), or 45,000 gp (master).

## MAGIC ITEMS AND INTRODUCING MARTIAL MANEUVERS

The *crown of White Ravens* and its variants offer great ways to introduce the Nine Sword disciplines and their mechanics to your players. By putting such an item into a hoard of treasure the party happens upon, you give the players tangible access to the Nine Swords system without requiring anyone to spend a feat slot or take a level in one of the new classes described in this book.

Given the wide range of skills that the disciplines rely on, you can tailor an item for a particular party member quite easily. For example, if the party's wizard is the only one with ranks in Concentration, it's likely that she will wear the *ring of the Diamond Mind* that the party finds.

If you really want to prime the players' interest in martial maneuvers, put one of these items in the hands of a villainous NPC. When the characters are first confronted with their foe's strange tactics and abilities, the players are likely to get curious as to how he attained them. Then when they find the item, they will have an answer that begs more questions.



*The Temple of Nine Swords falls, and survivors of the onslaught steal the nine swords, scattering them across the world*

# NINE SWORDS MONSTERS

The influence of the Nine Swords extends far beyond the Material Plane, and creatures all over the multiverse employ the techniques the swords symbolize. Most notably, the githzerai and githyanki learn maneuvers of the nine disciplines, and many of them become masters. This chapter describes some of the other creatures associated with the disciplines. Some, like the naityan rakshasa, are born martial adepts, just as some creatures enter life with sorcerous powers.

## NAITYAN RAKSHASA

*The person before you suddenly shifts, its skin growing fur and its hands cracking as bones twist and move. You get the brief impression of a dark-furred tigerlike being, but it vanishes and is replaced by the slick black skin and terrifying visage of something like a giant eel in humanoid form.*

Naityan rakshasas exist as evil incarnate. Inextricably tied to humanoids, some say they are embodiments of the worst of humanoid natures and were set upon the Material Plane as punishment by angry deities. Unlike other rakshasas, naityan rakshasas lack innate spellcasting ability and instead possess the power to take specific monstrous forms that grant them martial maneuvers and other abilities.

**NAITYAN RAKSHASA** **CR 7**

Always NE Medium outsider (native)
**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
**Aura** detect thoughts (DC 18)
**Languages** Common, Infernal, Undercommon

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**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19
(+1 Dex, +9 natural)
**hp** 67 (9 HD); **DR** 15/good and piercing
**SR** 17
**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

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**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)
**Melee** mwk greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+4) and
bite +10 (1d6+1) or
**Melee** 2 claws +12 each (1d4+3) and
bite +10 (1d6+1)
**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +12

Illus. by W. England

**Special Actions** change shape, style shapes

**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 18

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Balance +10, Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Gather Information +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +14, Jump +21, Listen +6, Martial Lore +5, Move Silently +11, Sense Motive +12, Spot +6, Tumble +15

**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** swordsage

**Possessions** masterwork greatsword

**Detect Thoughts (Su)** A naityan rakshasa can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 18 negates). It can suppress or resume the ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Change Shape (Su)** A naityan rakshasa can assume the form of any Medium humanoid.

**Style Shapes (Su)** A naityan rakshasa gains the maneuvers of particular martial disciplines and other abilities by adopting specific shapes using its change shape ability. When changing into one of these shapes, the rakshasa retains its claw and bite attacks and automatically adopts the stance listed for the shape. If the rakshasa cannot maintain the stance for some reason, it reverts to its natural form and loses access to the martial maneuvers the style shape grants. A naityan rakshasa can use only one maneuver per turn. Thus, if it uses a strike maneuver on its turn, it cannot then use a counter against an opponent while waiting for its turn to come up again. In any of these shapes, a naityan rakshasa has the backward hands typical of the rakshasa race.

*Earth Serpent:* In this shape, a naityan rakshasa has a snakelike head, a snake's tail instead of legs, and gray stony scales. While it is in earth serpent shape, it gains a +2 bonus to natural armor and can use the strength of stone stance and the mountain hammer (strike) and charging minotaur (strike) maneuvers.

*Hellfire Hunter:* In this shape, a naityan rakshasa looks like a hell hound in humanoid form. While it is in hellfire hunter shape, it gains scent and can use the flame's blessing stance and the fire riposte (counter) and flashing sun (strike) maneuvers.

*Night Creeper:* In this shape, the naityan rakshasa looks like a slick eel-like humanoid. While it is in night creeper shape, it gains a swim speed of 30 feet, sneak attack +1d6, and can use the island of blades stance and the ghost blade (strike) and shadow garrote (strike) maneuvers.

*Elusive Adversary:* In this shape, the naityan rakshasa has a head and fur like a displacer beast, and its arms take the form of displacer beast tentacles with hands coated in hooks. While it is in elusive adversary shape, it gains a speed of 60 feet and can use the shifting defense stance and the baffling defense (counter) and feigned opening (counter) maneuvers.

**Skills** A rakshasa has a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. When using change shape, a rakshasa gains an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If reading an opponent's mind, its circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks increases by a further +4.

## NAITYAN RAKSHASA LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about naityan rakshasas. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

**Knowledge (the planes)**

| DC | Result |
|---|---|
| 17 | This creature is a rakshasa, an embodiment of evil that plagues the peaceful races of the world by secretly living in their midst. This result reveals all outsider traits. |
| 22 | This creature is a naityan rakshasa, a member of the rakshasa race with the ability to take specific forms that grant it access to martial maneuvers. The backwards hands that you can see in a rakshasa's true form are apparent in their alternate forms. |
| 27 | Naityan rakshasas have four style forms: a hellhoundlike humanoid with scent and fire-based abilities, a stony snakelike form that has tough natural armor, a leech form that allows them to swim and make devastating sneak attacks, and a form somewhat like a humanoid displacer beast that they can take for defense. |
| 32 | Naityan rakshasas love the taste of humanoid blood, and some become so obsessed with it that they gather collections of humanoids or simply collect their blood. |

## STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

A naityan rakshasa maintains its disguise as long as possible, but when push comes to shove, it adopts a style shape to battle foes. A naityan rakshasa adopts the style shape most useful to it at the moment. In pursuit of enemies or confronting invisible or fire-using foes, it usually takes the shape of the hellfire hunter. When working with allies to flank foes or using a waterway to access a foe's encampment, a naityan rakshasa typically adopts the night creeper shape. If confronting foes alone, the earth serpent shape often proves most useful. Finally, the elusive adversary form comes into play when a naityan rakshasa needs to deflect enemy attacks or when it desires escape from the battle.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

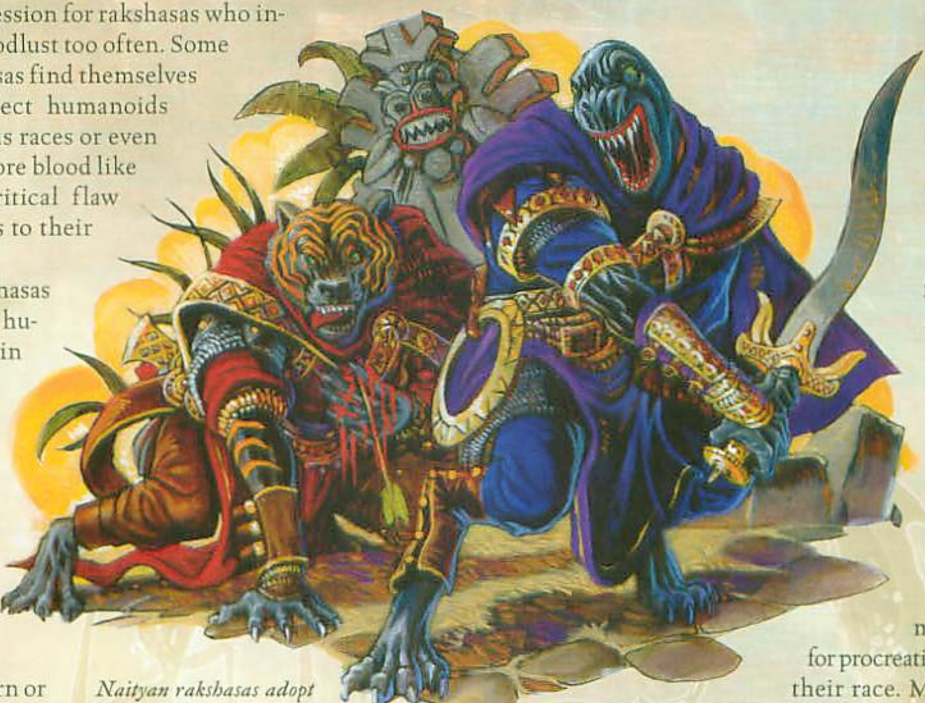
Naityan rakshasas rarely gather in large numbers. Like other kinds of rakshasa, each endeavors to gather influence and power for itself. Even so, naityan rakshasas never work alone. Instead they use detect thoughts, change shape, and their silver tongues to trick others into serving them or unwittingly doing their will. Naityan rakshasas also work in small teams, typically serving a more powerful naityan rakshasa but sometimes a rakshasa of another type.

**Fight Club (EL 11):** Three naityan rakshasas lead a group of hobgoblin warriors with slaves in tow, each rakshasa taking the form of a different hobgoblin. The rakshasas threaten to kill their captive slaves if accosted. They keep up their charade of being hobgoblins as long as possible, but when it becomes apparent that the hobgoblins aren't a match for the PCs, two adopt night creeper form to sneak attack foes, and the remaining one takes earth serpent form to help maneuver enemies into vulnerable positions. When the naityan rakshasas change shape, the hobgoblins flee.

## ECOLOGY

Naityan rakshasas need not eat, but they find the taste of humanoid blood, in all its varieties, exquisite. This vice can become an obsession for rakshasas who indulge their bloodlust too often. Some naityan rakshasas find themselves driven to collect humanoids slaves of various races or even to bottle and store blood like vintners—a critical flaw that often leads to their undoing.

Naityan rakshasas can mate with humanoids when in a shape compatible with the race of the humanoid partner. These unions rarely result in surviving children. Most are abnormal and stillborn or so deformed that they don't live long. Yet a few beautiful children result, their only deformity being backwards hands. Naityan rakshasas flee with these children, knowing that the humanoids around them will inevitably discover their innately evil souls. These immature naityan rakshasas cannot change shape but learn from a father or mother that their hands are signs of their true natures.



*Naityan rakshasas adopt their natural forms in death*

*Illus. by S. Ellis*

**Environment:** Nearly all naityan rakshasas are born and live on the Material Plane, making them native outsiders. They live in any environment where humanoids can be found living.

**Typical Physical Characteristics:** A naityan rakshasa stands roughly as tall as an average human and weighs slightly more due to a stronger-than-average build. In their rarely seen natural forms, they appear to be tiger-headed humanoids with backwards hands. Unlike a normal rakshasa or tiger, a naityan rakshasa's fur is black and bears bright red stripes. When young, a naityan first learns to take this true form, becoming able to adopt other appearances and style shapes as it learns better control of its change shape ability. Most naityan rakshasas can be seen in their natural forms only in youth, upon death, or with *true seeing*.

**Alignment:** Naityan rakshasas are always neutral evil.

## SOCIETY

Although their change shape ability makes it impossible to know their exact numbers, sages speculate that few rakshasas exist compared to the number of humans or even dwarves. Naityan rakshasas represent a portion of that small population. This makes living among humanoids a necessity for procreation and continuing their race. Meetings between naityan rakshasas can be so rare that an individual might consider itself the only one of its kind, but the need for supporting one another can draw those that meet to stay together or at least remain in contact. Groups of naityan rakshasas often form due to a familial link, and these siblings might work in concert for years until discovery or rivalry scatters them.

A naityan rakshasa works to establish a base of power and followers. It might do this through killing and impersonating an important figure, or it might build a support organization from the ground up. Naityan rakshasas do not possess the spellcasting powers of other types of rakshasas and so rely upon deception and their fighting skill to achieve their aims. Many of these creatures lead thieves guilds, assassin clans, or martial orders, or hold high positions in military or police forces.

## TYPICAL TREASURE

Naityan rakshasas have treasure typical for a creature of their CR. If possible, naityan rakshasas prefer to wield magic weapons and bear items that improve their combat abilities. Few naityan rakshasas wear armor unless it is light enough not to interfere with their skills.

### ANOTHER RAKSHASA?

Is the original rakshasa enough for your game? If you're familiar with the rakshasa presented in the *Monster Manual III* supplement, do you draw the line at having three? In either case, consider using the naityan rakshasa by keeping it constantly in one style shape as the creature's natural form and removing the change shape ability. (Losing change shape doesn't significantly affect the naityan rakshasa's CR.) In this way you can use the hellfire hunter, earth serpent, night creeper, and elusive adversary each as a new monster. If you do so, you should change the creature's damage reduction to something that doesn't remind players of the rakshasa but that is equally uncommon.

## NAITYAN RAKSHASAS WITH CLASS LEVELS

Naityan rakshasas advance by class, and their favored class is swordsage. Naityan rakshasas advance as swordsages normally, but they have the added benefit of being able to simultaneously maintain a style shape stance and a stance granted by the swordsage class.

**Level Adjustment:** +6.

# RETH DEKALA

*A terrible armored figure confronts you. Much of its body is composed of sorcerous green fire, leaving only the chest, arms, and helmed head floating in midair. It wears an ornate breastplate and carries a wicked halberd in its taloned hands.*

Long ago, a race of mortal warriors known as the reth dekala sold their souls to an infernal power in exchange for the power to destroy all who opposed them. For a time, they were the scourge of their world, undisputed masters over the wide lands they had conquered—and when they died, their debt came due and they were enslaved by the archdevil who had aided them. The reth dekala served their master as fierce warriors, fighting in the endless wars of the lower planes, but when the archdevil turned them against their own mortal descendants, the reth dekala rebelled against their infernal lord. The archdevil cursed his faithless warriors, setting in their very flesh the perpetual torment of his corrupt flames—but the reth dekala destroyed their former master and took his crimson citadel on the iron plains of Acheron for their own.

The reth dekala now exist as cursed infernal warriors, eternally tormented by the sorcerous flames that consume but do not kill them. To end their torment they must fulfill the oath they broke long ago, and destroy every one of their own living descendants. But their mortal lives were long ago, and many generations have passed, so hundreds of individuals scattered around the world now carry traces of reth dekala blood. The cursed warriors seek out these living scions of their own race, and slay them wherever they are found. While they search, they serve as capable mercenaries, guardians, and overseers for those who appreciate strength and honor untempered by mercy.

### RETH DEKALA — CR 4

Usually LE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)
**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
**Languages** Common, Infernal
**Aura** vilefire (1d6, sickened, DC 15)

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**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
(+2 Dex, +5 armor, +2 natural)
**hp** 37 (5 HD)
**Resist** acid 15, fire 15, fortification 50%
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares); air walk
**Melee** mwk halberd +11 (1d10+6/×3) or
**Melee** claw bracer +9 melee (1d6+4)
**Ranged** vilefire blast +7 ranged touch (1d8 acid/fire plus sicken)
**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +9
**Atk Options** Combat Reflexes, aligned strike (evil, lawful)

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**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 5th):
*Stances*—martial spirit (1st), thicket of blades (3rd)
*Strikes*—daunting strike (5th), death from above (4th), disarming strike (2nd), entangling blade (4th)
*Counters*—wall of blades (2nd)

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**Abilities** Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 15
**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (halberd)
**Skills** Balance +11, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +10, Jump +13, Listen +6, Martial Lore +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6
**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** sorcerer
**Possessions** masterwork breastplate, masterwork halberd

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**Air Walk (Ex)** A reth dekala cannot truly fly, but it naturally remains aloft. It moves as if constantly under the effects of an air walk spell.

**Aligned Strike (Su)** A reth dekala's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as lawful-aligned and evil-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

**Fortification (Ex)** Due to its unusual body composition, a reth dekala has a 50% chance to ignore the extra damage dealt by a critical hit or sneak attack.

**Martial Maneuvers** A reth dekala knows several martial maneuvers and stances (initiator level 5th). It recovers expended maneuvers by resting and meditating for 5 minutes. It can use each maneuver once per encounter.

**Vilefire Aura (Su)** The corrupt fire that comprises a reth dekala's body burns and sickens those who close with it. Each round at the beginning of the reth dekala's turn, creatures adjacent to the reth dekala take 1d6 points of damage; living creatures also become sickened for 1 round. A DC 15 Fort save negates both effects. Half the damage dealt is acid damage and half is fire damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Vilefire Blast (Su)** A reth dekala can attack foes at range by lashing out with bolts of the corrupt flames that compose its body. This is a ranged touch attack with a range of 60 feet that deals 1d8 points of damage. Half the damage dealt is acid damage and half is fire damage. Living creatures struck by a vilefire blast must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become sickened for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills** A reth dekala has a +4 racial bonus on Balance and Jump checks.

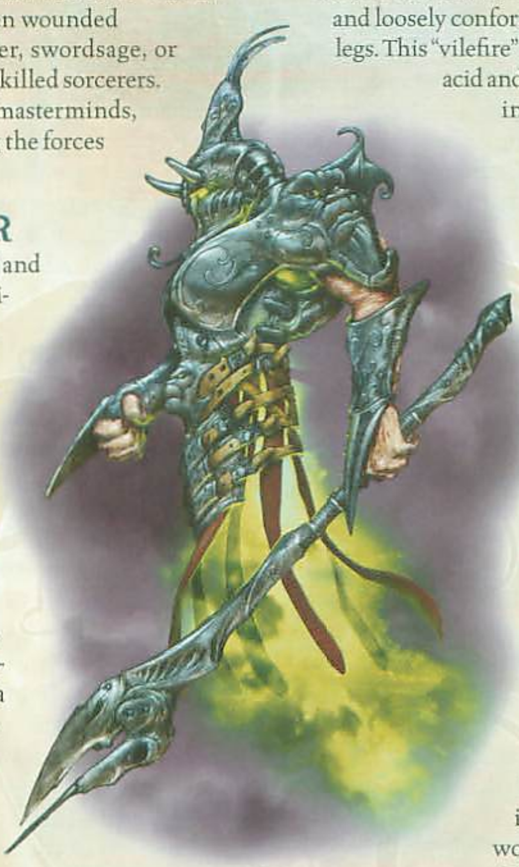
## STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

A single reth dekala is a good companion or guard for an evil spellcaster or mastermind. It is extremely loyal and would sooner die than dishonor itself by failing to uphold its word. Groups of reth dekala might seek out a surviving scion of their race—possibly a PC who doesn't even know that he numbers a reth among his ancestors, or more likely, an NPC whom the PCs must protect.

Regardless of its role, a reth dekala excels in melee combat, and works best if paired with a companion creature that relies on magic or ranged attacks. Two or three reth dekala working together can be quite formidable, since they are highly disciplined and cooperate well, mixing ranged and melee attacks to defeat their foes.

In battle, a reth dekala often uses its air walk ability or its death from above maneuver to avoid battles with "dishonorable" foes (rogues, skirmishers, or minions) and seek out a suitable captain, champion, or commander to duel in melee. It usually hovers about 5 feet above the ground, giving it the +1 higher ground attack bonus. The creature uses its vilefire blast only when confronting enemy spellcasters or archers who avoid close combat. The creature usually begins a battle with its thicket of blades stance active, and switches to martial spirit once it (or its allies) have been wounded

Reth dekala often have crusader, swordsage, or warblade levels, and many are also skilled sorcerers. These advanced foes can serve as masterminds, tyrants, or oppressors, marshalling the forces of evil to subjugate the weak.



*The reth dekala are the cursed remnants of a once-mighty race*

Illus. by A. Swekel

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Reth dekala are highly disciplined and hierarchical. They do little for individual gain, and they follow the orders of their superiors with unswerving faithfulness. Although they might choose to serve others as mercenary champions, they do not do so without lengthy and explicit oaths that clearly spell out exactly what the reth dekala will do for their employer—and what their employer must do in turn. A reth dekala mercenary contingent might be a single reth dekala bodyguard, or a company of elite battle-champions numbering in the dozens. They usually take service in groups of two to five individuals called fists.

In addition to their mercenary work, reth dekala are often engaged in various missions, raids, or quests dictated by the leaders of their race in the Crimson Citadel. A fist of reth dekala might be tasked with recovering some item of value, seeking out new employers, or hunting down and exterminating any of those living mortals who carry the reth bloodline.

**Marked Name (EL 7):** Three reth dekala visit a small town in search of a hidden reth descendant. They seek out and kill a local hero named Hereth Sannaford, only to find that Hereth had a younger brother. As the reth dekala mount a relentless and brutal search for the surviving Sannaford, the town elders send for the PCs and beg them to stop the merciless rampage. The heroes arrive just in time to intervene before the reth dekala slay Teren Sannaford too.

## ECOLOGY

Reth dekala were once mortal humanoids, but their long bondage in the infernal planes and the curse of the archdevil they rebelled against have transformed them into true outsiders. They require no sustenance or rest, and they do not die unless slain on Acheron.

The most unusual feature of the reth dekala is the foul magical flame that perpetually consumes their bodies—the curse bestowed on their race by their former master. Their lower torsos simply trail off into a sickening incandescent vapor. Greenish-yellow flames smolder here and there all over their bodies, as if the flesh itself is frozen in the midst of some awful disintegration, but the flames themselves are part of the warriors' bodies and loosely conform to the shape of the missing trunk and legs. This "vilefire" combines some of the properties of both acid and fire, sickening living mortals who come in contact with it.

**Environment:** The reth dekala are natives of Thuldanin, second layer of the Infernal Battlefield of Acheron. A few roam the broken debris-fields of the layer, or stand lonely vigils in isolated watchtowers scattered across the plane, but most reth dekala remain in or near the vast fortress-monastery known as the Crimson Citadel. Once the seat of the nameless archdevil who originally corrupted the reth, the Citadel is now the home for this cursed race.

On the Material Plane, the reth dekala can be found in almost any terrain or climate. They are most comfortable in warm environs, but they pursue their missions and quests wherever they might lead.

**Typical Physical Characteristics:** If their lower bodies were humanoid in form and didn't vanish into sorcerous green flame, reth dekala would be tall, imposing warriors close to 7 feet tall. As they appear now, they are about 4 to 5 feet tall. Reth dekala normally hover about 5 feet above the ground, and therefore "stand" close to 10 feet tall. Their torsos and armor together weigh about 120 pounds. Different individuals might have wildly different decorations, designs, and devices on their arms and armor, but all favor full helms that conceal their faces. Beneath the helms, the reth dekala have oddly flat, seamed, leathery features and wide mouths studded with numerous small, pointed teeth.

Reth dekala are without gender and are effectively ageless. To make more of their kind, they perform a special rite that infuses the body of a captive humanoid with the corrupt vilefire—an agonizing process that the reth dekala view as a great honor to bestow upon a worthy foe.

## SOCIETY

The reth dekala think of themselves as a strictly governed order of warriors. They do not see themselves as an army; they are a brotherhood of knights, and even a common reth dekala expects to be treated as an overlord and conqueror by any lesser being. The reth dekala are bound to follow the orders of their superiors, and they undertake few missions or tasks on the Material Plane unless ordered. For example, a reth dekala might be ordered to garner wealth and prestige for the Crimson Citadel by fulfilling a suitable mercenary contract, to scour the countryside of a Material Plane kingdom in search of hidden reth descendants, or to seek out and destroy the members of a knightly order opposed to reth dekala activity.

Most reth dekala are known as dekarchs; above these are the ur-dekarchs, the thaumakarchs, and the high thaumakarchs. To earn the title of thaumakarch, a reth dekala must learn to complement its martial abilities with sorcerer spellcasting, so the highest-ranking reth dekala are dangerous sorcerers as well as martial foes. Exacting oaths of fealty and behavior dictate their behavior toward one another, creating a complex hierarchy of fealty and obligation from the common dekarch all the way up to the High Lord Thaumakarch of the Crimson Citadel.

Above all, the reth dekala seek to be free of the horrible curse laid upon them by the archdevil they rebelled against. To break the vilefire curse, they must fulfill the oath of obedience they broke—each surviving mortal reth must die, as the overlord of the Crimson Citadel ordered long ago. The realm of the reth no longer exists, but across the world hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people (mostly human) still carry traces of the reth bloodline. The reth were a heroic race in their day, and more than a few of these surviving scions are heroes in their own right. Some know of their ancient heritage and the danger posed by the reth dekala, but most are ignorant of their peril.

**Alignment:** Reth dekala are rigid and inflexible. They care little for the troubles of other creatures, and in fact view themselves as an elite race of martial overlords to whom lesser beings owe tribute. Some reth dekala lack the cruelty and conquering drive of their fellows, and use their strict honor code as the sole guide to their existence; these lean toward a lawful neutral alignment. A few rare individuals abandon or pervert their oaths and become nothing more than malicious reavers of neutral evil or chaotic evil alignment.

## RETH DEKALA LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the planes) or Martial Lore can learn more about reth dekala. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

**Knowledge (the Planes) or Martial Lore**

| DC | Result |
|---|---|
| 14 | The reth dekala are a race of mysterious warriors from some infernal plane. They are cruel and merciless mercenaries whose bodies are partially composed of eerie greenish vapor. |
| 19 | Reth dekala are outsiders native to the Infernal Battlefield of Acheron. They are skilled martial adepts and have innate abilities resembling those found in the Devoted Spirit, Iron Heart, and Tiger Claw disciplines. The yellow-green mist that forms their lower bodies is a sickening mixture of fire and acid. |
| 24 | Reth dekala are resistant to acid, fire, critical hits, and sneak attacks. They are cruel and pitiless, but they abide by a strict code of honor and never deviate from it. They seek out and kill mortals belonging to a mysterious ancient bloodline, apparently believing that some curse or torment will be lifted from them if they succeed in exterminating every last person who shares this old bloodline. |

## TYPICAL TREASURE

The reth dekala have little use for wealth other than as a status symbol. In their convoluted codes of honor and obedience, the right to levy tribute on one's inferiors is a key duty and privilege of those who hold power. Reth dekala abide by tribute arrangements scrupulously, and the cursed warriors do not harm those who meet their demands, although these might be ruinously heavy at times.

In addition to gems, art objects, and coinage, reth dekala highly value magic items—especially armor and weapons. Most reth dekala wield the best magic weapons they can find. Reth dekala with levels of sorcerer also make use of scrolls and wands.

## RETH DEKALA WITH CLASS LEVELS

The ancient reth were formidable warrior-sorcerers, and the reth dekala still possess an innate talent for sorcery. Sorcerer is the favored class of the race. Reth dekala who take levels in a martial adept class can add their reth dekala Hit Dice to their martial adept class level to determine their initiator level and highest-level maneuvers known. Their innate martial maneuvers remain in a separate pool from any new ones they gain from class levels, although they do count for the purpose of meeting prerequisites for martial maneuvers gained through class level. They cannot recover expended maneuvers from their reth dekala martial ability during an encounter (but they can recover maneuvers acquired from a martial adept class normally).

The reth dekala destroyed the only being whom they might have considered a patron deity, and therefore do not worship any gods. During their uprising against their overlord, they slew those few of their fellows who were clerics of their infernal master. Reth dekala clerics are still quite rare, and are most likely to venerate Hextor or the principles of law, tyranny, and war.

Reth dekala have a racial +4 bonus on Balance and Jump checks. Martial adept classes and fighter-like classes (any class with full attack progression) are considered associated classes for purposes of determining an advanced reth dekala's CR.

**Level Adjustment:** +5. Reth dekala can move through the air with ease and have a number of special resistances and defenses.

# VALKYRIE

*With a peal of thunder, a vision of fury appears before you. With wings like storm clouds and eyes that spit lightning, this fierce womanlike creature stomps a hoofed foot and waves two swords in your direction, each crackling with electricity.*

Valkyries, often called storm angels by the ignorant, soar through the skies of Ysgard seeking battle with the plane's most valiant warriors. Fearless paragons of martial prowess, valkyries thrill at combat and fight worthy foes at every opportunity. Although prone to disobedience, valkyries often serve deities of war as messengers and enforcers.

**VALKYRIE** **CR 9**
Always CN Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)
**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10
**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common

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**AC** 25, touch 17, flat-footed 25; uncanny dodge
(–1 size, +8 Dex, +1 armor, +7 natural)
**hp** 115 (11 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron
**Immune** cold, electricity, fear, sonic
**SR** 17
**Fort** +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

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**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares); fly 60 ft. (perfect)
**Melee** +1 *short sword* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+7/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity) and
+1 *short sword* +17/+12 (1d8+3/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity) or
**Melee** 2 slams +16 each (1d6+7 plus 1d6 electricity)
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
**Base Atk** +11; **Grp** +22
**Atk Options** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Power Attack, aligned strike (chaotic), electricity attacks, maneuvers
**Special Actions** lighting gaze (DC 18) ,sonic burst (DC 18)

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**Maneuvers and Stances Known** (IL 10th):
*Stances*—prey on the weak (7th)
*Strikes*—charging minotaur (1st), clever positioning (DC 20) (2nd), devastating throw (3rd), mountain avalanche (DC 22) (5th), pouncing charge (5th), wolf fang strike (1st)
*Boosts*—boulder roll (4th)
*Counters*—baffling defense (2nd), counter charge (1st)
*Disciplines:* Setting Sun, Stone Dragon, Tiger Claw
Each of a valkyrie's maneuvers can be initiated once per encounter, with no recharge.

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**Abilities** Str 25, Dex 27, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16
**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Power Attack, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting$^{B}$, Two-Weapon Fighting$^{B}$, Weapon Finesse
**Skills** Balance +23, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +18, Hide +17, Intimidate +16, Jump +26, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +10, Martial Lore +12, Sense Motive +14, Spot +10, Survival +1 (+3 on other planes), Tumble +23
**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** swordsage
**Possessions** padded armor, 2 +1 *short swords*

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**Aligned Strike (Su)** A valkyrie's natural weapons, as well as any weapons she wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

**Electricity Attacks (Su)** A valkyrie deals 1d6 points of electricity damage with her natural attacks and any weapons she wields.

**Lighting Gaze (Su)** A valkyrie's can send out strokes of lightning at those who meet her gaze. 4d6 electricity, range 30 feet, Reflex DC 18 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Martial Maneuvers** A valkyrie knows several martial maneuvers and stances (initiator level 10th). She recovers expended maneuvers by resting and meditating for 5 minutes. She can use each maneuver once per encounter.

**Sonic Burst (Su)** As a swift action, a valkyrie can clap her wings together to create a thunderclap. Creatures within 30 feet of the valkyrie take 4d6 points of sonic damage. A successful DC 18 Reflex save results in half damage. Valkyries must wait 1d4 rounds between uses of this ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

## STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

A valkyrie typically begins combat from the air, using the pouncing charge maneuver to make a full attack at the end of a charge. When flight isn't practical, a valkyrie uses the wolf fang strike against foes. In either case, a valkyrie often follows up the charge with a thunderclap as a swift action.

In melee, a valkyrie prefers to fight one on one. Thus, a valkyrie might use charging minotaur and clever positioning to move close to her chosen foe, and devastating throw and boulder roll to deal with others. For defense, the valkyrie relies on counter charge and baffling defense.

A valkyrie almost never actively gazes at a foe, preferring to use her melee attacks. Of course, the passive attack of her lightning gaze can put foes at a significant disadvantage.

If a valkyrie finds herself outmatched, she might flee, surrender, or fight on until death, depending on the nature of those she fights. A valkyrie fighting an enemy of superior martial skill often surrenders and offers service and homage in exchange for her life and learning something of the fighter's skill. Rarely, a valkyrie battles on until she takes her last breath—just to experience the honor of fighting such a formidable enemy. All the while, a valkyrie praises her opponent's skill, never accepting surrender or truce. A valkyrie who nears defeat against a foe primarily using spells or other nonmartial attacks usually flees, sometimes returning with reinforcements and other times leaving to seek battle against a more worthy martial-oriented opponent.

## SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Valkyries travel alone or in small groups. Soaring through the clouds, valkyries challenge any intelligent creature bearing the armament of a warrior who seems worthy. Often, valkyries happen upon a battle and observe the combatants from the air or from hiding. The valkyries then swoop down to "rescue" skilled fighters from the melee, taking them to a safe place where they can recuperate and ready themselves to do battle with their saviors.

**Fight Club (EL 14):** Two valkyries took a wounded paladin from a battle in which he single-handedly fought a group of marauding trolls. Now one valkyrie guards the paladin as he rests in a nearby cavern while the other valkyrie seeks another opponent to fight. The guarding valkyrie refuses to give up the paladin unless a PC is willing to enter into single combat with her. The returning valkyrie immediately attacks when she sees a battle, dropping her catch—the leader of the trolls—to battle a PC. The valkyries attack the PCs using the tactics described above, while the troll leader takes the opportunity to finish off the paladin before turning on the PCs. Use the statistics for the troll hunter (*MM* 247) for the troll leader. For the paladin, use the statistics for the half-celestial 9th-level human paladin (*MM* 145). The paladin is out of spells and has used his lay on hands ability for the day, leaving him with 70 hit points.

## ECOLOGY

As outsiders, valkyries need not eat or sleep, and thus do not normally affect the ecology of an area. Yet they tirelessly wing through the clouds in search of battles below, and by challenging and killing a society's best warriors, they

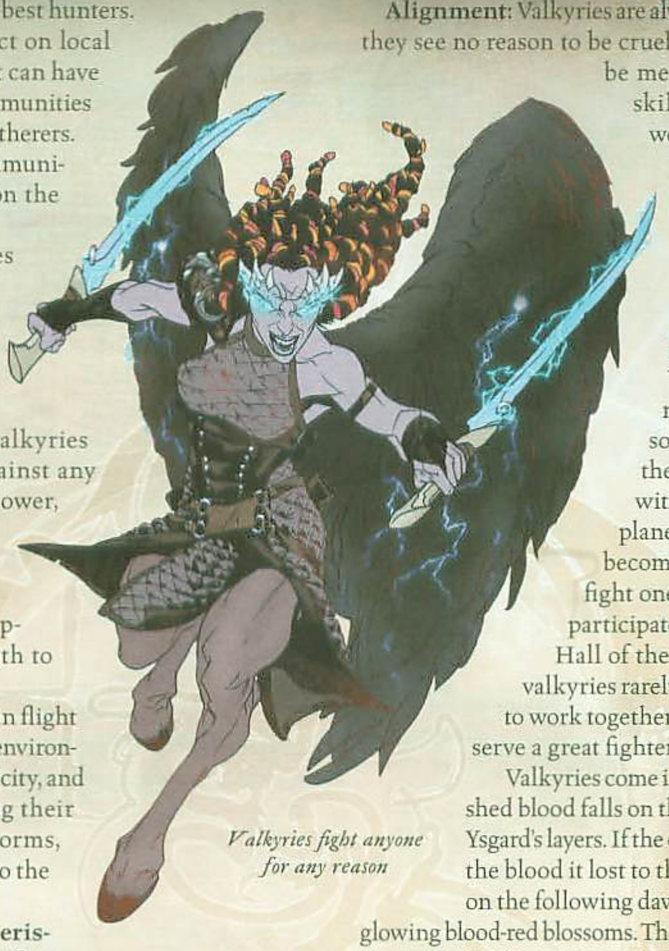
Illus. by K. Andrasofszky

might also take that society's best hunters. This rarely has a direct effect on local ecology, but in harsh lands it can have significant effects on the communities left without their best food gatherers. The dissolution of those communities can then wreak havoc on the surrounding region.

**Environment:** Valkyries live on all the layers of the Heroic Domains of Ysgard, and this plane of constant battle, death, and resurrection is their favored home. On Ysgard, valkyries test their fighting skills against any creature, regardless of its power, and they are even willing to fight less worthy foes, secure in the knowledge that both they and their opponents will arise from death to fight again.

Valkyries prefer to remain in flight high above the ground in any environment. Immune to cold, electricity, and sonic effects, valkyries wing their ways through the worst storms, gleefully riding their winds to the next battleground.

**Typical Physical Characteristics:** Valkyries stand about 10 feet tall and weigh 350 pounds. Although gendered, valkyries do not give birth to their own kind. Instead, valkyries arise from the blood of deities that has been spilled in combat and dropped upon the soil of Ysgard. Valkyries rarely have room in their hearts for emotions other than battle fury, but when they do, a union results in celestial or half-celestial children. As beings born of the blood of gods, valkyries do not age.



*Valkyries fight anyone for any reason*

## VALKYRIE LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about valkyries. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

**Knowledge (the planes)**

| DC | Result |
|---|---|
| 19 | This creature is a valkyrie, an outsider from the plane of Ysgard known for taking the valiant from battlefields. This result reveals all outsider traits. |
| 24 | Valkyries are immune to cold, electricity, and sonic effects. They have amazing martial abilities, and their gaze is capable of electrocuting their foes. |
| 29 | Born of the blood of deities spill in battle, valkyries often serve gods of battle and war. Most serve Kord. |
| 34 | Valkyries often offer to serve someone who can defeat them in single combat using martial skills. |

**Alignment:** Valkyries are always chaotic neutral. Although they see no reason to be cruel, neither do they see cause to be merciful. Testing their martial skills in battle against anyone worthy forms the basis of their understanding of virtually everything, an outlook that doesn't allow for lawful ideals such as respect for authority or the rule of law.

## SOCIETY

Valkyries instinctively recognize each other as siblings of a sort, and this sisterhood causes them to feel a sort of camaraderie with one another. On their home plane of Ysgard, this camaraderie becomes blurred as the valkyries fight one another regularly and often participate in the celebrations in the Hall of the Valiant. Yet on other planes, valkyries rarely fight one another, preferring to work together to find brave opponents or to serve a great fighter.

Valkyries come into being when a deity's battle-shed blood falls on the hallowed grounds of one of Ysgard's layers. If the deity lived through the combat, the blood it lost to the earth sprouts glory flowers on the following dawn, carpeting the landscape in glowing blood-red blossoms. The short-lived glory flower's blossoms are prized components in magic items, and when properly brewed can be used to make *potions of heroism*. Should the glory blossoms be left undisturbed until the following dawn, the glow they emit builds to an almost blinding crimson light as they die, and a valkyrie appears when the light is most intense. The newly born valkyrie seeks out its parent deity to serve it. Most valkyries in service to a deity serve a god or goddess that lives on the plane, such as Kord or Olidammara, but such service rarely lasts more than a hundred years of a valkyrie's immortal life due to their independent natures.

## TYPICAL TREASURE

Valkyries typically have no coins or goods and carry the full value of their treasure in items. They travel light and have little use for gold or other valuables. Most carry magic weapons of some sort and invest whatever spoils they gain into improving their tools of battle. The only treasure the valkyrie above carries is her *+1 short swords* and padded armor. If a valkyrie chooses to wear armor, it's rarely heavier than padded armor because other armor types would reduce her Dexterity bonus to AC.

## VALKYRIES WITH CLASS LEVELS

Valkyries advance by class, and their favored class is swordsage. Valkyries who take swordsage levels can add their swordsage Hit Dice to their effective swordsage level (10th) to determine their initiator level and highest-level maneuvers known.

**Level Adjustment:** +5.

# MASTER THE SECRET MAGIC OF STEEL

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